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UBCIC urges active boycott to referendum

Western Canada Wilderness Committee Director Joe Foy has delivered his mail-in ballot, unopened to the offices of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).

"My wife and I had a lengthy conversation when the ballots arrived at our house and we both decided that the best way to register our opposition to the BC Treaty Referendum was to deliver our ballots to an organization that represents First Nations," explained Foy. "The Treaty Referendum is designed to delay settlement of the B.C. land question. It is a huge waste of time and money - and it's immoral because it goes after First Nations rights," said Foy.

At the Wilderness Committee's annual general meeting held on October 13, 2001, the membership unanimously passed a resolution to oppose the B.C. Liberal government's initiative to hold a province wide referendum on treaty negotiations.

Foy is urging all British Columbians to listen to what First Nations are saying about the Treaty Referendum - then act accordingly.

The UBCIC recommends that people who wish to protest the Treaty Referendum send their unsigned ballot, in a plain envelope, to Chief Stewart Phillip, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 500 - 342 Water Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1B6 or to Chief Judith Sayers, Hupacasath First Nation, 2383 River Road, Box 211 Port Alberni, BC V9Y 7M7.

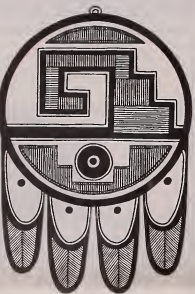
Tribal council representatives held a press conference earlier this month to speak their opposition of the current provincial referendum process. In protest, representatives from the 16 tribal councils symbolically burned ballots, but they are not recommending that individuals spoil their ballots. In fact they say that "sending a spoiled ballot to elections BC will lend credibility to the process and may make it easier for the referendum questions to pass."

Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the UBCIC explained the purpose of the active boycott. "A spoiled ballot will not count as a validly cast vote. Voting No is problematic as the questions are so ambiguous that the Liberal government can interpret the answers to reflect their political goals. The unsigned ballots, however, will be counted and presented in protest to the government of B.C. The process is a sham and only serves to vilify our efforts to reconcile our Aboriginal Title and Rights with the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada."

First Nations have a constitutional relationship with both the Provincial and Federal governments. Section 35 of the Constitution of Canada guides the current relationship and has been clarified through the various court decisions. The referendum process continues the long-standing adversarial approach undertaken by both the Provincial and Federal Government of their outright refusal to recognize Aboriginal Title and Rights.

Chief Phillip concluded, "We are working with a growing coalition of political, labour, church and concerned citizens who all agree that referendum is immoral and unconscionable. We are advocating an 'active boycott' encouraging people to direct their

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CHRISTOPHER HARKET/CHAMRAD 2002.

ballots to one of many collection points throughout the province."

The Canadian Jewish Congress, B.C. Federation of Labour, Council of Senior Citizens, Canadian Muslim Federation and the Suzuki Foundation are among the organizations that jointly condemned the \$9-million process, which has seen 2.2 million ballots sent out to B.C. voters.

Chief Dan Wilson, Chair of the Okanagan Nation Alliance, today called on all concerned British Columbians to participate in the active boycott. In what he termed "the first big mistake" of the Campbell government Chief Dan Wilson invited British Columbians "to deliver a wake up call to the Premier, and let him know we are no longer living in the 1960s."

"Business leaders have told Campbell he's wrong to proceed with this vote, the Government of Canada has told him he is wrong, Liberal pollster Angus Reid has told him he is wrong, political commentators like Vaughn Palmer and Rafe Mair have told him he is wrong, former Liberal MLA Clive Tanner has told him he is wrong, and some of his own cabinet and backbench know he is wrong to have proceeded with this vote," stated Chief Wilson.

"When the provincial government gets around to announcing the results of this referendum, I predict that the vast majority of British Columbians will have either not voted or voted no," said Chief Wilson. "The real question after that will be will Campbell listen to the British Columbians, or will he continue to place the economic recovery of B.C. in peril by continuing to antagonize First Nations throughout this province?"



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Tax exempt status for Treaty 8 members challenged

by John Copley

Just days after Federal Court Justice Douglas Campbell handed down his controversial March 2002 decision affirming the tax exempt status of First Nation members of western Canada's Treaty 8 agreement, both Ottawa and Alberta announced their intention to appeal. The treaty, signed in the summer of 1899, ruled Campbell in a 172-page report, must be honoured by the federal government because, "Canada has not extinguished this treaty right and there is no justification proved for its infringement."

Campbell also said in his ruling that "any income earned by a member of Treaty 8, regardless of where it is earned, is exempt from tax."

After Ottawa announced its intention to launch an appeal, spokesmen told national media that Campbell's decision, which affects about 60,000 Aboriginal Canadians (most of whom are not employed) in Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C. and the Northwest Territories would soon bankrupt the country and cause social chaos and upheaval.

"Not true, absolutely not," said Gordon Benoit, 48, in a recent interview with Edmonton media. "There is no concrete evidence of any kind that this is going to wreck the fabric of Canadian society," Benoit, who ten years ago began the process of questioning the validity of taxes when the original Treaty 8 agreement declared there would be none, scoffed at government's words and accused them of using the media to incite hatred and create malcontent through lies, unsubstantiated innuendo and the misrepresentation of facts.

"Bankrupt the manufacturing industry?" exclaimed Benoit, incredulous over the comments made by Ottawa bureaucrats. "What we need is a reality check. Are we super businessmen? All of a sudden we have the know-how to run a manufacturing company? Most of us don't even own cars." Benoit said he was shocked to hear disparaging comments coming out of Ottawa and called the tactic undermining.

"They're scaring people and creating hate," he added. "There's legislation in place, supposedly, to prevent these kinds of statements, but apparently government is exempt."

About half of the 60,000 Treaty 8 members Campbell's ruling applies to are already living tax-free on reserve land throughout western Canada. Only a small fraction of the other 30,000 will be able to capitalize in a way as to consider it beneficial. A lack of education, substandard housing, poor social conditions and the 80 percent unemployment rate that is devastating many of Canada's First Nations communities does not allow much provision or opportunity for gain.

Of course, there is the argument that because the tax-exempt ruling also applies to the descendants of the original Treaty 8 members, it gives special status to one group of people. Critics of this philosophy ask whether that's any worse than what the government of British Columbia is proposing when it declares "one rule, one way, one standard for everybody" - while entirely forgetting that Indigenous cultures in Canada are already embedded in the Constitution as Distinct Peoples with agreements that must be honoured by this government and every other one that comes after it.

Others say the ruling will harm the country's tax system.

"If the tax system is harmed because of the few dollars that it's going to miss out on because of the Treaty 8 decision, it must already be severely mismanaged," said Edmonton resident, David Tommie, a Treaty 8 member whose home is in Yellowknife, N.W.T. "Is Ottawa trying to shift the blame for their incompetence to us? Maybe if they are so worried about the money they'll forfeit, they should reconsider the hundreds of millions of dollars they forgive and forget every year when other countries or even large companies come crying that they have no money."

Soon after Justice Campbell's decision was announced Treaty 8 negotiator Jim Badger told media "for the first time in my life, I feel good about being a Canadian. For many, many years I didn't feel like a Canadian - it was (because of) the lack of recognition."

"That's just the way I felt when the decision was announced on the radio," said Tommie, "but now I don't know."

Joseph Steinhauer, a Treaty Technician for the Saddle Lake First Nation, says Campbell's ruling is proof that Canada is finally coming around. In a recent "guest column" in the *Edmonton Journal*, Steinhauer wrote: "For the last 140 years, the Indigenous peoples of this land have been subjected to government policies of racism and out-

right hatred simply because of the colour of our skin."

Given the history of Canadian-Indigenous relations and the despicable methods used by the federal government to ensure that Indian people would not survive into the 20th century by first employing the "infested blanket" policy, whereby trade blankets infested with smallpox were used to kill Indigenous people indiscriminately and assimilationist residential school policies that attempted to crush our family structure and languages were used, I would remind all Canadians that this was grossly unfair.

"Indigenous people were not given the right to vote in a federal election until 1961 unless they enfranchised or denied their birthright as Indians. During that same time period, there were restaurants that had signs in the front window that stated quite clearly that no dogs or Indians were allowed."

The government might appeal Justice Campbell's ruling, but chances are it'll just be another wave of taxpayers' money. More and more Canadian judges are favouring Aboriginal peoples when the decisions being made will have a direct reflection on the validity of the promised word and the outstretched hand, especially when those promises come from governments.



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Indigenous Games in Winnipeg this summer

by John Copley

The last time the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) took place in Canada was in the summer of 1997 when 4,872 Native athletes met in Victoria, British Columbia to celebrate Indigenous culture and to participate in 12 days of athletic and sports competitions.

This year NAIG 2002 will take place in Winnipeg, Manitoba, from July 25 through August 4. Billed as the largest ever showing of Aboriginal peoples in competition in Canadian history, this year's games have attracted entries from 25 teams comprising of 7,369 athletes and coaches from First Nation, Metis, Inuit and Native American communities. "We're very excited, of course," assured NAIG Communications Manager, Denis Sinclair in a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*. "The entire City of Winnipeg is getting involved in this year's Games and from the feedback we've received it looks like it's going to be a fantastically good time for all."

Organizers were hoping to get Winnipeggers out in numbers as more than 4,500 volunteers are needed to ensure the Games come off without a hitch. So far it looks as though that number will be met. On Friday, April 19 the 2002 NAIG Host Society (Winnipeg) Inc. held a special noon-hour concert to mark the kickoff of 100 days before the Opening Ceremonies get underway. Good weather and lots of interest attracted a large crowd to the hour-long event, which featured both contemporary and traditional Aboriginal performers.

The Cultural Village, which will encompass numerous sites along the rivers of the Forks, including the Scotia Bank Stage and Festival Park, will be in operation from July 29-August 4.

"The Cultural Village was designed to provide a unique opportunity to showcase the talents of Manitoba's Aboriginal artists, as well as Indigenous performers and artists from across North America," explained Sinclair. "The Village also awards an opportunity to convey through educational demonstrations and teachings, the historical and contemporary experiences of Manitoba's Aboriginal athletes. Athletes, the general public and members of Aboriginal communities will also have the opportunity to interact collectively in a unique cultural setting that will create lasting and memorable impressions."

Every evening during the Games, the Scotia Bank Stage will highlight a different theme of performers with each one offering a unique look into the various cultures and traditional backgrounds of the participants.

This year's team list has increased over previous years and several teams that didn't make it to Victoria will be in Winnipeg.

"Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, New Mexico, North Dakota and Michigan are among those who couldn't make it to Victoria in 1997, but will be here to participate this summer," explained Denis Sinclair. "And the numbers of athletes have really been a pleasant surprise. Interest is high - the numbers speak for themselves."

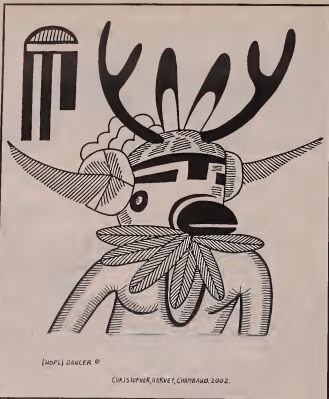
Examples of that interest are evident when one looks at the team list and the number of participants making the trip from each team. Alberta, for instance, is sending 874 athletes, British Columbia, 599. Some other numbers include: Manitoba, 1,117; Saskatchewan, 900; NWT, 192; North Dakota, 298; Wisconsin, 314; Florida, 256; New York, 499 and Michigan with 165. The smallest Canadian team will come from Nunavut, who is sending five athletes while the smallest contingent from the U.S.A., 18 athletes, will

arrive from Oregon.

"Interest is so keen," explained Sinclair, "that the Team Chef de Mission from North Dakota, Lance Azure, drove five hours through a snow storm to ensure that the state's 298 athletes would make the deadline." NAIG 2002 General Manager, Christian Sinclair, says he's thrilled with what's happened up to now, and anticipates an outstanding summer event. "All expectations for NAIG 2002 have been exceeded," he said in the days leading up to the April 19, 100-day kickoff. "The growth of these games is showing the world that the strong, brave and true spirit of North America's Aboriginal peoples continues on. We are charged with carrying on the tradition established by the Elders when the Games first took place in 1990. All of Turtle Island will join together in celebration of sport and culture, just as our ancestors did thousands of years ago. This is truly a proud moment for us all."

Visitors to the North American Indigenous Games in Winnipeg will be delighted as they watch thousands of athletes participate in a diverse array of activities that include athletics (track and field), baseball, basketball, golf, soccer, archery, rifle shooting, wrestling, swimming, lacrosse, canoeing, boxing and more.

For more information about the Games please contact the 2002 North American Indigenous Games, c/o 1760 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R2V 1Z7. The toll free number is 1-877-682-2002. Local Manitoba calls can be directed to (204) 927-2002 and faxes can be sent to (204) 927-2099. Email inquiries are welcome at 2002naig@mb.aibn.com.



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Inaugural Winter Carnival at Hobbema a success

by H.C. Miller

Members of the four First Nations at Hobbema, south of Edmonton, were busy last month when they enjoyed their First Annual Maskwacis Winter Celebration.

"We had a lot of people participating in curling, volleyball, basketball, a hockey tournament, hand game and a powwow," says organizer Milton Okeymow.

The intent was to create a mix of cultural, sports, and entertainment venues. As a tourism initiative, this first event would create a benchmark upon which future endeavours would be planned.

"Next year we hope to expand to 20 venues and we expect 10,000 people to attend, with a regional economic impact of about \$1.2 million," he says, adding that this first event managed to reach about half that goal.

People attended from throughout Alberta, as well as from out of province, with a team from Ontario participating in the curling bonspiel and some from British Columbia as well. As well, the entertainment line-up was exciting, with the well-known and popular group Eagle and Hawk performing at the cabaret. "This group has been nominated for a 2002 Juno at the upcoming television awards in April," he says. At the powwow the host drum was Northern Cree, who have just returned from the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles. "Miss Jessica Hodgeson is the Miss Tiny 2002 Universe, a local Hobbema girl, and she was also in attendance, so the whole program was definitely full of quality content."

Local volunteers were assisted in running the three-day event by numerous sporting clubs and other groups. These partnerships allowed the opportunity to do some fund-raising for cultural initiatives. "For example, the midget hockey players worked the powwow, the Team Alberta for the Indigenous Games worked the volleyball tournament, and another

sports team manned the hockey tournament," he says. This not only gave the other groups an opportunity to raise some funds, but also enhanced the community pride of the Samson Cree Nation members, who were the primary organizers of the event. "One thing's for sure, it couldn't be done without a lot of volunteer effort to develop the foundation and the support from the community leaders and corporate sponsors as the pillars," he concludes.

"Altogether we estimated about 6,000 man-hours to execute the whole affair, and the office of Economic Development put in a lot of those hours, so they are to be commended for that," he says. The surrounding communities, including

Erminekin, Louis Bull and Montana bands which are the other three First Nations at Hobbema, were offered spots on the board of directors who did the organizing. In his role as business development officer for the Samson Cree Nation, he was at the centre of the activity. "It was pretty well 24/7 for me, up to and including the actual event," he laughs.

Together, the Four Nations have one of the best infrastructures in Central Alberta to host this kind of activity, he says. "We have gymnasiums in six schools in Hobbema. In Samson alone, we have a new high school, a middle school and a kindergarten school, as well as our own Howard Buffalo Memorial Centre," he explains. As well, Erminekin has two schools, Louis Bull has just opened up a school and has a recreation centre, and the Montana Band has an indoor arena and their school gym. "It gives everybody a chance to be involved, and gives us lots of venues for the various activities," he says.

Next on the agenda for the busy community is a trade show on May 21 and 22. "This will be our sixth annual trade show and business mixer," he states. Two guests expected to attend are Don Burnstick and George Leach, both former hosts of the annually televised National Aboriginal Awards Show. "A hockey camp for young players is also in the planning stages for the first week of July, with Coach Ron Low, from the New York Rangers along with other NHL and college coaches," adds Okeymow. "We're having all sorts of fun down here and if anyone wants more information on these projects, give us a call at Samson Economic Development."



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Blackfeet woman uncovers U.S. gov't mismanagement

by John Copley

Canada's Aboriginal people aren't the only ones trying to get government to live up to its promises and obligations and rectify wrongs of the past. But unlike Canada's First Nations, who usually wade into a war of words and negotiations with government manned with experts, historians, researchers and lawyers, American Blackfeet Indian Elouise Cobell, is going it alone. Well, almost.

"When I'm really feeling exhausted, I visit Ghost Ridge," said the 43 year old crusader in a recent interview in Browning, Montana. Ghost Ridge is infamous because it was here in the winter of 1902 that a tribe of Blackfeet Indians perished, starved to death because government failed to deliver food rations it had promised through a negotiated settlement less than a year earlier.

"I sit and I wonder," continued Cobell, "how painful it must have been for my people to starve to death in the middle of winter. Then I say, 'what are you complaining about? If you can't deal with this you must be a wimp.'"

But the diminutive fighter has already proven she's no wimp. In fact, she's getting more support than ever and recently launched a class action suit against the U.S. Government for more than \$12 billion. She's already won several smaller battles with government and is confident that the settlement she is seeking for compensation for monies owed from logging, mining, road-building and other development on millions of acres of traditional Aboriginal lands, will be resolved.

It appears the American government finds itself in a bind over this particular case and at least one VIP, Interior Secretary Gale Norton, is already facing contempt-of-court charges for failing to deliver court-ordered financial records.

That's because there are no records, says Cobell. She remembers the day she decided to start keeping records; that was the day she decided to investigate what she thought looked like more than just records mismanagement.

"When I tried to correlate the payments with government books kept by the Bureau of Indian Affairs," she said, "nothing matched up. Some months a cheque would arrive in the mail, but then it might take months before the next one would come."

Her fears were confirmed when Norton told U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth that many of the accounting documents have been lost or destroyed and in some cases, never even existed.

The Blackfeet Nation, which is located just south of the Canadian border, not far from Blackfoot country,

is not rich in oil or gold and never has been. The 500,000 Native Americans, some of whom are no longer living, that are named in Cobell's class-action suit, were subjected to "a great many hardships and a great deal of pain and suffering," she said because of "government's failure to deliver" the money from trust funds set up decades ago to manage Indian lands.

In the courtroom, an astounded Judge Lamberth heard the U.S. government admit that not only did it not know where the records went, but also had no idea of the addresses for 50,000 Native Americans who are now owed money, called the revelation one of the worst cases of government fiscal shortsightedness



and irresponsibility on record. But despite the hard work and the fact that she's never asked for a dime, not even a headline for herself or her family, Elouise Cobell, often finds herself alone and in the dark. Resistance by government was bad enough, though expected. What she didn't expect, however, was that even some Native Americans would criticize her efforts, some even suggesting she was in it for the money.

Not true, says Cobell. "One of the persistent rumours I always hear is that I'm going to somehow collect millions of dollars in reward money for taking on the lawsuit," she said recently. "I stand to gain no more than any other trust fund recipient. It is not personal gain but the collective impact of a settlement that I'm most optimistic about."

Cobell says she knows it will take time, but she's ready to stay on course, no matter what. "I've heard from friends that the government thinks I'm tired and that eventually they will wear me down," she closed. "They hope I'll just go away. I won't. My challenges are not as great as those who died at Ghost Ridge. I will continue."

The Trust for Native Americans generates about half a billion dollars each year. Payments are neither equal nor fair. While some Indians receive a mere pittance, other get millions. It all depends on the size of their share holdings. The problem lies in the fact that when the records can not even be produced by the government agencies who created them in the first place, how is one to know just whose share holdings are whose?

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Prayer vigil held at pig farm

by John Copley

During the past couple of years more than 50 Vancouver-area women have mysteriously disappeared, never to be heard from again. Most who vanished had been seen the same day or the same evening, often just an hour or two before the disappearance took place. The case has been baffling and over the years not much investigation went into trying to find out what was happening to the missing women. In the past year, however, the disappearances have been making the front pages and about six weeks ago a local hog farmer's property was searched and as a result several charges of murder were laid against 54 year old Robert Pickton.

The number of Aboriginal women who are counted among the missing is not known for certain, but figures range from 17 to 28 persons, just over half the total that have been reported. Many Native leaders and women's rights advocates say the police are to blame for the death toll rising beyond a dozen. Aboriginal Elders and various women's rights groups recently joined about two dozen family members and friends to pray and to burn sage at the gates of the pig farm, located just on the skirts of Port Coquitlam.

"I think it's a tragedy that it had to take this long to have the police do this investigation," remarked B.C. Native Women's Society, Vice-President, Leonie Rivers. Also the president of the Aboriginal Women's Council, Rivers is urging government to conduct an inquiry into the whole matter, but not before the police investigation and the court proceedings against Pickton are complete.

"We don't want to jeopardize anything that could help find the people responsible for this tragedy." Soowahlie First Nation Chief Doug Kelly agrees. He wants a full inquiry to be held, but says first things first. He told media that "it's only right that at the right time and place there be a review, that there be some sort of understanding about how this investigation was handled. If mistakes were made, there must be an accounting."

Terri Brown, President of the Ottawa-based Native Women's Association of Canada, told Dene Moore of the Canadian Press that words couldn't "even get close to describing the loathing I have for a place such as this."

Special police units are still searching the Pickton farm and expect to be doing so for some time to come. Pickton is being held in a Vancouver jail without provision for bail.



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Leaders place Aboriginal tax policy at top of agenda

Thirty First Nations leaders from across the country have agreed to set up a working group that will explore taxation issues affecting the rights of First Nations, including tax immunity. The recent meeting, organized by Native Leasing Services (NLS), followed a series of court rulings which have failed to resolve Aboriginal taxation disputes with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA).

"Taxation as it relates to First Nations peoples is a complex issue and there is a diversity of opinion on the matter," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Matthew Coon Come. "Given the recent decisions in the Shilling and Benoit cases I believe it is important that the AFN be constructive and proactive on this issue. Our role is to examine all issues relevant to First Nations and to provide the best information so that they are in a better position to make informed decisions on such matters."

"The courts have not helped us. They've neither ruled for us, nor against us, and they've consumed a lot of our resources," said Roger Obonsawin, President of NLS. "Recent court developments have only brought an increased urgency to addressing taxation and economic justice for Native people."

Last month, The Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear an appeal by NLS which sought to resolve a

seven year dispute with Revenue Canada over the tax status of First Nations people who work off-reserve for an employer whose headquarters are on reserve. Rather than wait for more court developments, NLS commissioned York University economist Fred Lazar to prepare a policy paper for Aboriginal tax policy reform.

"The current disputes, at least as seen by Ottawa, with regard to Aboriginal taxation seem to me to perpetuate the Federal Government's resistance to the legitimate sovereignty of the First Nations," explained Mr. Lazar. "Our primary objective is to demonstrate how tax immunity, recognized through tax exemptions, has been used thus far for nation building and to demonstrate the critical importance of these exemptions for the social and economic development of the First Nations."

The thirty leaders who attended the recent meeting represented First Nations councils and organizations across the country.

Native Leasing Services (NLS) is a self-supporting network providing training and skills development to more than 1000 First Nations people across Canada,

with the vast majority being sole-support mothers. NLS "leases" employees to 159 clients in nine provinces and one territory.

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Lost traditions brought back in award-winning film

by H. C. Miller

Zacharias Kunuk was born in a sod house on the Arctic Tundra in 1957. By 1981 the resident of Igloolik, located in what today is known as Nunavut, Canada's newest territory, was an accomplished sculptor. "I started carving at 12 years of age, originally just to earn extra income," he states.

In 1981, he and a buddy travelled to Montreal to market his sculptures, and brought home the Arctic's first video camera to a community that did not yet have television. He had been experimenting with 35 mm still cameras, and the move to video was a natural progression. Today he is an award-winning filmmaker with many feature presentations to his credit, including a 13-part television series entitled *Nunavut, Our Land*.

His most recent offering, *Atanarjuat - The Fast Runner*, has been bestowed with the Banff Centre's National Arts Award.

"It is truly wonderful not only to be able to tell our own stories, but to know they resonate with all kinds of people across the country and around the world," he says. As winner of the prestigious award, Kunuk receives the Donald Cameron Bronze Medal, a \$10,000 cash award, and a two-week residency at the Banff Centre.

Marrie Mumford, Artistic Director of the Aboriginal Arts Program at the Banff Centre, says this is the first time that the Banff National Arts Award has been designated for an Aboriginal artist and this year it was designated for an Aboriginal artist in Film and Video. What's unique about Zacharias is that he's been working with the people from his community of Igloolik for the last 15 years, producing and directing films to tell their stories. "He retold a story that may be 2000 years old, and produced a feature film with actors he has worked with in Igloolik," she says. "When I watched the film I was impressed with not only the story and the beautiful filming of the land on which the story took place, but with the remarkable talents of all of the actors. He told the story in his language, and I didn't even realize I was reading English subtitles," she says. The story on the big screen just pulls viewers in. "Zacharias' outstanding film *Atanarjuat* is the kind of unique achievement in Aboriginal filmmaking that we can



CHRISTOPHER HARVEY, CHAMBAUD 2002.

celebrate as nothing less than a total re-imagining of the way Aboriginal stories are told on film." The unique achievement of *Atanarjuat* is that the style is more consistent with the original tales of this land than any of its precursors in the genre, she adds.

Odeon Theatres is distributing the film, starting in April when it will be in all Odeon theatres across Canada. "Then in June it's being released in the United States," she adds. The film has won awards at the Toronto Film Festival and the Cannes Film Festival and

took six of the eight Genies it was recently nominated for. "It was moving to see all the Inuit in the audience, some in their traditional dress, some in tuxedos. It was wonderful to see all of the children who were there. Zacharias is creating their future," says Mumford.

The film tells the story of the 1200 people located in Igloolik on a small island in the North Baffin region of the Canadian Arctic. The legends of the people of the area have been kept alive for thousands of years by oral storytelling. The film is part

of this continuous history, carried forward through the marriage of Inuit storytelling skills and new technology. Amongst the many legends it preserves is the lesson which teaches the young Inuit the danger of setting personal desire above the needs of the group. The film offers audiences an authentic view of Inuit culture and oral tradition through the eyes of those who are on the inside, the Inuit themselves.

The Fast Runner is Canada's first feature-length fiction film written, produced, directed and acted by Inuit.

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Governance Act needs more First Nations input

by Ennis Morris

Ottawa Member of Parliament (NW), John Godfrey, the Liberal's Vice-Chairman of the Commons Aboriginal Affairs Committee, said recently in the nation's capital that not enough Aboriginal leaders were get-



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ting involved with the government's new Indian Act reform package and that if the numbers don't improve, problems will be difficult to avoid. "I'm anxious," Godfrey told media recently, "that whatever we do have legitimacy in the sense of having built not only on the original consultation process, but doing whatever it is we can to find common ground with people who've been thinking about this for a long time." Indian Affairs has been quoted as reporting that about 10,000 people took part in last year's community-level consultations but Native leaders who boycotted the sessions says the figure is meaningless because it only represents about three percent of the total number of First Nations people that are governed by Indian Affairs and the Indian Act.

Hundreds of Canada's Aboriginal leaders and the organizations that support them have been voicing their displeasure over the suggested reforms initiated by Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister Robert Nault in 2001. One of the biggest and the most important organizations to withdraw from the consultation process is the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Representing more than 630 First Nations communities across Canada, the AFN, which had its budget slashed (\$10 million cut) in half at the end of last year, pulled out of the process because of differences of opinion about the way in which government was proceeding.

MP Godfrey's committee is currently in the process of interviewing witnesses as they review the new Act in preparation for Nault's final changes and eventual implementation sometime later this summer. "I think we need to spend more time as a committee with

people who are formally tasked with representing Aboriginal communities," reiterated Godfrey, encouraging Native leaders to get involved before Nault makes the changes without input from the people the new act will affect the most. "Participation in the consultation process does not seem to be as high as one would have hoped."

Many of Canada's First Nation leaders have called for more time, better information, a clearer picture and an opportunity to at least present a different side of the issue before Nault makes any final decisions. Alberta Chief Adrian Stimson whose Siksika First Nation was the first visited when Nault began his tour to various communities at the beginning of the consultation process, asked why Nault was in such a hurry.

"Recent history," said Stimson, "has shown that a proper consultation process could be accomplished within 18 months as directed by the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Corbiere* case. Two months? This time frame is too short. We must have time to examine the details of this initiative more thoroughly before any real consultation can take place."

The AFN, with a \$10 million cut in its budget, has been unable to shed its influence on government, but unless there's a unified front to challenge the changes to a way of life that will inevitably result when reforms are made to the 126 year old Indian Act, Nault will proceed on schedule.

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Anglican church and others urge citizens to vote No

by John Copley

Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia have gained a new, but perhaps not unexpected ally, in their fight to have government put an end to anything they may be contemplating as a result of the recently distributed referendum ballots on Aboriginal rights. The eight questions on the ballot deal with Aboriginal issues, particularly as they pertain to land claims and treaty resolution.

During the first week of April news came from the Anglican Church that Archbishop David Crawley, the top-ranked bishop in the province, was issuing a "pastoral letter" to be "read on Sunday" to more than 200,000 members of the Anglican Church in B.C.

Admitting that it was an unusual move for the church, Crawley said the situation was also unprecedented.

"In rough terms," he said, "the pastoral letter is urging all Anglicans to vote No to all questions." He also suggested that parishioners could also choose to sign the ballot and return it, without answering any of the questions.

An unmarked ballot, said Crawley is counted as a rejected ballot, while "a spoiled ballot will not be counted at all. It will neither be registered as a protest nor do anything about preventing a Yes vote." The ballots, currently circulating throughout the province, are to be returned to government by May 15. They are seeking a simple Yes or No to eight questions that many of the province's citizens, both Native and non-Native have already deemed illegal and virtually meaningless. And the Anglican Church isn't alone in its desire to see an end to the referendum. Reverend Tony Plomp, a spokesperson for the more than 7,000 Presbyterians in the Lower Mainland told media he thought the questions on the referendum to be unfair, vague and misleading. Some in the mainstream media have taken Plomp to task for comments he made and reasons he gave for his decision to back the cause of Aboriginal peoples.

"Most people don't have a grasp of the history and complexity involved in this whole process," was one of the remarks made by Plomp. Another suggested that both the questions and the vote "subjected" a minority with rightful claims under Canada's Constitution, to the views of the mostly uninformed majority."

Considering that the average reading level for Canadians is now right around the Grade 9 level, and that most information passed out to the public is wrought with enough legal jargon to baffle a grade 12 reading-level lawyer, it isn't difficult to believe that Canadians, for the most part, only think they know what's going on when it comes to Aboriginal peoples and their various traditions, cultures, lifestyles and beliefs.

The eight principles the B.C. Liberals are trying to extol in their referendum are so vague and so misleading that it would be impossible for any group of individuals to sit down and agree on just what road to take once the ballots are in. The questions are put together in such a fashion that no matter what the people answer, interpretation can be easily be misconstrued and guided by the government who put it together in the first place.

During a recent news conference hosted by Archbishop Crawley and New Westminster Bishop Michael Ingham, the former spoke about the referendum.

"Minority rights should not be decided by a majority referendum and the rights of the First Nations in B.C. have been accepted by the courts of the land as well established and can't be altered by a popular vote."

The First Nations Summit, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, and others have also voiced strong opinions about the 2.2 million ballots that have now been mailed out to British Columbians across the province.



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NORTH AMERICA'S RAILROAD



Memories Of Spring

by Xavier Kataquapit

I have a lot of memories of getting wet this time of year. As the warmer weather melts the large quantities of snow our world here up north turns from frozen snow and ice to slush and water.

Before my home community of Attawapiskat developed a proper drainage system for the melting snow in the spring, we had to deal with many problems and inconveniences.

The warm weather created water obstacles everywhere in the community. People who followed familiar paths and trails across town suddenly had to deal with roadside drainage ditches that were covered in a deceptively solid slushy layer of snow. As they walked over the soft snow, the slush gave way and one's feet sunk into the water. In some areas, the slowly melting ice inside culverts that covered driveways prevented water from properly draining and created large pools in the community.

To deal with this time of the year my mom, Susan, took out our black, rubber galoshes from the bottom of the closet to dress my brothers and myself in footwear that would keep our feet dry. I am sure many people remember this type of boot that had a sort of an orange trim. Unfortunately, galoshes did not always keep us dry while we played in the lake-sized puddles throughout the community. Usually the large puddles of water had a layer of slippery ice underneath that caused us to slip and stumble into the icy water. When we arrived home soaked, mom was there to dress us in dry clothes and then she dried our wet boots and clothes over the wood stove inside our home. Remember this was not all that long ago. It took place in the 1980s. Imagine we still had a wood stove for our primary source of heat and we also did not have indoor plumbing.

When I got a little older and was able to use a snowmobile on my own, mom sometimes gave me the chore of going out to collect snow for drinking water. Collecting snow for drinking water is known as Nah-Tah-Ah-Koo-N-Neh-Oo in Cree. This was a chore I learned from helping other family members each winter



as I was growing up. Snow had to be collected away from the community and in areas where snowmobiles had not travelled. There was a method of collecting this pure snow for our drinking water. First a top layer had to be cleared away to expose an underlying layer of brilliant white crystallized and granular type of snow. This was the perfect type of snow that we melted in big pots on the wood stove or if we were on the land over an open fire to provide wonderful drinking water.

I recall the first spring I was able to use a snowmobile on my own. Mom sent me out to collect snow for the last time of the season. We would soon be able to fetch water from the river. The warm weather had melted much of the snow in town and had exposed the gravel roads in the community. To make matters more challenging, the river that I had to cross to get to good snow had become very slushy. I used

the excuse that the only snowmobile I would be able to use was my dad's special Nordic 60, an oversized and powerful machine with an extra wide track, two huge skis and a large yellow cowling. I had been waiting for the right time to ask to use this rare machine which we all simply called the 'Nordic'. It was the only one of its kind in the community and I had the privilege with this chore to use it. To carry the large bags of snow back I hitched up a very solid and heavy wooden toboggan that was as wide as the Nordic and constructed to haul big loads.

I made my way across town choosing the best route over snow remained in the community and on to a trail that led to the river. The big Nordic handled the slushy river with ease. Once I reached the far bank of the river I parked in an area of good snow and filled up ten sacks which I placed on the sled. I wanted to really impress mom and dad. A normal load would have been only about four or five of these large sacks.

When I finished, I fired up the Nordic and started to move thinking that my powerful snowmobile would easily bring me home. Surprise, surprise, the load would not budge. I worked at loosening it up for hours rather than concede that I had wanted to pull too heavy a load. Finally, the big Nordic managed to pull my gigantic load of snow home. Mom and dad were happy and quite shocked that I had managed to bring in more than enough snow to hold us over for a long time. I tried not to show it but I was exhausted and miserable, as I was soaked from head to foot. You can imagine how happy I was when the community got indoor plumbing and running water in the early 1990s.



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The power of tobacco

by D. B. Pawis

Tobacco is something that's been in my life for a long time. I remember telling my mother when I was about 6 or 7 years old that I would never smoke or drink. If I had been able to hold true to those words I would have been able to save a lot of money and problems that surfaced as a result of smoking and drinking in the years that followed.

I was told a long time ago that tobacco was never really intended for our lungs. It was used as an offering in our prayers to the Creator. Tobacco "ties" are still used in the Sioux traditional Sweat lodge ceremonies; we offer our Elders and Pipe Carriers tobacco so they can bless and use it in their work and prayers to the Creator.

With the recent Tax increase on tobacco products here in Alberta, I've noticed a lot of changes and have heard a lot of comments. Most people say it's time to quit, others decide to "cut back"... I don't like making promises I can't keep. Instead, I choose to consider what I see and hear around me. When I paid \$8.35 for a single pack the day the new budget was announced, I shared briefly the animosity that most smokers felt towards the government for this outrageous move. Since then I noticed other things, people aren't as prone to selling a smoke for 25 cents like they used to.

When my cravings were really pushed to the limit I could count on some big old left over butts outside the local NO SMOKING areas, but even that's changed

now. Try and find a decent leftover now since the tax increase! Butt-picking has changed forever!

On the other hand I've been told by several Elders that if I poison myself by actually smoking tobacco the power of the tobacco I use in prayer offerings and ceremonies is diminished. The last time I heard that was from Cliff Pompano, an Elder who works with the Red Road Healing Society. I happened to be sitting in his car at the time and felt especially obligated to consider his words.



However, there's a whole bunch of other reasons why I shouldn't smoke, and the reasons are far from financial or spiritual in nature. There's the health issue, not just my own, but those around me. It wasn't until my son was born that I began reading more about the effects of second hand smoke and I learned that our children are more prone to ear infections if their parents are smokers.

The controversy surrounding tobacco abuse continues to plague society in the same way that it does for a number of other social issues. The Justice System is currently looking at turning Correctional Facilities

into smoke-free zones. This is another move which will undoubtedly have repercussions. The Edmonton Remand Centre should expect a solid show of rejection to the proposals that have been tabled recently. Meanwhile, if you ever take a look at the front door of the Remand, you'll see staff members out there having a smoke. If the legislation has any impact at all, it will surely effect more than those who are on the inside.

I suppose there are answers to the questions at hand... but like I've said a few times before, it's not always the right "answer" we seek. A lot of the time it's the right "question."

If any one wants to question the "power of tobacco" or the ways and means of solving a social dilemma, then feel free to get more than your share of "hot air" and heated denials from the rest of the smoking population. Until there are improved health alternatives put in place "besides" higher taxes we can expect to ride the never ending tobacco teeter-totter.

All My Relations.

APTN plans changes for new season

by Ennis Morris

Anybody who has worked in a radio station, particularly one that's running on the AM Band, knows that the lower the frequency, the better the audience. Numbers like 520 or 630 or 880 are considered by those in the industry to be the cream, while 1340 or 1580 or 1660 are generally deemed unpopular.

So it goes on the television dial. Channel numbers smaller than 50 do better for audience ratings than do channels with numbers higher than 50. That's one of the main reasons that the increasingly popular, Winnipeg-based Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) is talking about making changes. A smaller channel number will be sought but according to recent reports, additional changes could also include a new look and a new attitude.

On-Air since late 1999, APTN is a unique station not only because of its strong Aboriginal content, but because it offers some of the best first-hand information and education available on the television today. Interviews, profiles, community news reports, well known and highly respected special guests, quality on-air personnel that make viewing APTN a pleasure rather than just something to do are just some of the good qualities the station offers to its viewers and if its executives get their way, it's only going to get better.

Program Director Jim Compton said in a recent statement in Winnipeg that the time had come to provide more programming geared toward youth, the future leaders of their communities.

"I'd like to see APTN become the network of choice for Aboriginal youth," he remarked. This approach, he said would help youth "to learn what's happening in their communities and their lives and to find help regarding some of the issues they're facing. Our audience wants to see Aboriginal people and Aboriginal issues, and there's just not that much out there. Essentially, we have to start from ground zero in terms of drama, variety, documentaries and perspective shows."

When the Canadian Cable Television Association met in Vancouver recently, APTN executives submitted an application to have a lower channel number assigned to them. No decision has yet been announced.

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Leaders denounce B.C. referendum

by John Copley

The questions have been rearranged and a few have been dropped but the eight that remain are intended to change the way in which the Province of British Columbia deals with Aboriginal rights, land claims and treaty issues. At least that's the way it appears after recent words by the province's Attorney General that suggest that the referendum is nothing more than a manipulative, quasi-legal conspiracy designed to guarantee that government gets its way, no matter what the voters say.

British Columbia's Referendum Act dictates that the results of a referendum are binding on government if more than half the ballots cast indicates that voters have responded in the same fashion. But Premier Glen Campbell's government has gone a step further with a recent statement by Attorney General, Geoff Plant, who on April 8, told media that he didn't really care how many people handed in the completed questionnaire, nor how they voted.

"If three people vote and two vote in favour, the result is binding on government," Plant said. "It's as binding as if three million or two and a half million people vote."

In that same statement to Canadian Press (CP) reporters, Plant said the referendum would only be binding on government if the answers to the questions are 'yes'. These words present quite a turn of events on the part of government because just a few days earlier the Attorney General told media that the results of the referendum would be binding as principles that would help guide the way in which government handled treaty negotiations.

Numerous attempts by Aboriginal leaders to put an end to the referendum have failed in the courts, though provincial Supreme Court Justice Robert Hutchinson did delay the delivery of ballots until after he'd rendered a decision to an argument presented by the Hupacasath First Nation that declared the referendum questions are both biased and illegal.



The court action took place near the end of March when Chief Judith Sayers, leader of the Port Alberni-based, Hupacasath First Nation, tried to have the courts approve an injunction to stop government from mailing out the referendum questions. After a short deliberation Hutchinson and the B.C. Supreme Court turned her down.

The Vancouver Island Chief said the whole matter was far from over and that any decisions made by government that are based on the results of the referendum will create nothing but chaos and protest action.

"This referendum will kill treaties," assured Chief Sayers, "and if we can't resolve treaties, then we're going to create maximum economic uncertainty."

Continued on page 42

Manitoba Chiefs campaign against governance act

Representatives of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) recently started a major lobbying campaign to stop the proposed First Nations Governance Act Initiative of the Minister of Indian Affairs, Bob Nault. The delegation is composed of Grand Chief Dennis White Bird of the AMC, Grand Chief Francis Plett of the Manitoba Keewatinow Okimakanak (MKO) and Grand Chief Margaret Swan of the Southern Chiefs Organization.

The delegation met with MPs of various parties including John Harward, Rick Laliberte and Larry Bagnell of the Liberal Party. The MPs have undertaken to bring the views of the Manitoba delegation to the attention of Minister Nault and to the House of Commons.

"The MPs were very interested in the issues we raised about the legitimacy and value of the consultation process that the Minister used in this initiative.

Minister Nault claims that over 400 First Nations communities support his process. This is totally erroneous. The MPs clearly understood our concerns that this process responds to the Minister's interests and not to First Nations needs and aspirations. They agreed that any process of this nature should be First Nations driven in order to ensure that our concerns and interest are at the forefront of any initiative," stated Grand Chief Dennis White Bird.

The delegation also met with the full NDP Caucus where the main discussions centred on the enhancement of self-governing implementation for First Nations governments. The delegation then met with other MPs and key supporters in the Ottawa area. This was the first step of the implementation of an action plan developed in Winnipeg on March 11 and 12 at the National Treaty and Inherent Right Gathering. A National Political Action Committee was established and they will implement the action plan that calls for continued and escalating lobbying efforts and protests to stop this ill-conceived plan by Minister Nault and start dealing with the real issues facing First Nations in Canada, explained Chief White Bird. Lobbying efforts will also be directed towards church, labour, political parties and interest groups in the coming weeks.

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Haida Nation initiates claim to offshore resources

by John Copley

The Haida Nation of British Columbia, who recently laid claim in B.C. Supreme Court to their long-standing hereditary homelands, the Queen Charlotte Islands, has added yet another measure to their momentous claim. On March 6, 2002, the Haida Nation filed a claim with the same Supreme Court court for the offshore waters and the vast treasure of undersea resources that lie within the boundaries of the Queen Charlotte Islands, a action that is being recognized as the first of its kind in Canada.

Haida Nation President Giindaji Guujaaw told media the main purpose of the suit is to ensure that the Haida have both a say and a role in determining how the area they've lived in for several hundred years will be managed and developed.

"What we want," said President Guujaaw, "is resource development that is sustainable and ecologically responsible."

The claim by the Haida might have taken some by surprise, but those who have been following the fight to have the moratorium on offshore oil drilling lifted in the province, are only too aware of the damper this puts on any immediate plans to accomplish that goal.

The region being claimed by the Haida in their most recent court action is thought to be holding at least twice as much gas and oil as the well-established Hibernia oil fields, located just off Canada's East Coast. Combine that with the outcry during the past several years by British Columbia industry and others who say that reduced timber quotas and poor fishing is causing hardship and unemployment, and the result is almost predictable, especially when one considers government's penchant for bowing to big business.



The nearly 30 trillion cubic feet of gas and more than 10 billion barrels of oil estimated to be lying under the vast bed of sea mud in the Hecate Strait has the potential to fill government coffers to the tune of more than \$4 billion a year for the next eight or ten decades. The Prince Rupert-based, North Coast Oil and Gas Task Force, an expert and recognized source, predicts that more than \$295 billion in gross profits would eventually come from the estimated oil reserves, and more than \$5 billion in gross revenues from the gas deposits. The development of the

project alone would generate thousands of jobs. Quite an incentive in an area of the country where jobs are scarcer than ever and the desire to earn the big bucks paid out by the oil industry is keen. Perhaps that's why last summer Energy Minister Richard Neufeld said he would soon announce an outline about how the new Liberal government "is going to take the offshore oil and gas issue forward in an expedited fashion."

During that July 17, 2001 news conference, Minister Neufeld did admit that there was no real fast way to start drilling for oil. "Even if we were to lift the moratorium tomorrow," he said, "it would be at least eight years down the road before the first well was drilled."

The obstacles that must be overcome before the moratorium can or will be lifted, however, are proving difficult, and now that the Haida have laid claim to most of the bodies of water and the resources under that water between the Queen Charlotte's and a stretch of land near Prince Rupert, the quest for a fast solution has become almost impossible.

Of course, there is also the federal government to consider. Before B.C. can actually begin drilling for oil, the federal government must first agree to lift the ban. The Haida want their land claims issues resolved before they'll consider agreeing to anything that might once again disrupt their way of life. There are also numerous environmental groups to deal with. They speak with large membership numbers, each one a voter. And most of these groups have already expressed their negative reaction to opening drilling operations off the province's beautiful coastline.

The moratorium on exploratory drilling along the coastal waters of B.C., was first initiated in 1959, though some limited test drilling was permitted. In 1972 the moratorium was reimposed by both the provincial and the federal governments and has been in place ever since. When Premier Campbell's government recently commissioned both environmental and scientific studies to see whether or not resource extraction can be achieved without damaging the environment, he promised to include First Nations communities.

Campbell said his government "wouldn't try to go ahead without the federal government and Aboriginal communities joining with us on this." Considering the B.C. Liberal government remains determined to hold its referendum on Aboriginal treaties and land claims, it seems incredible that they would think the province's First Nations communities foolish enough to believe any promise that relates to equity, fair play, honour and/or sharing resource money.

Obviously, the Haida did not believe the promise. If they had, they wouldn't be seeking justice from the courts. But in fact, the court is the only place they can turn to for justice. The court has understood the arguments of the Haida in the past and will surely do so again in the future. The challenge will be in having government abide by the decisions of its own legal experts and those of the Justices of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Haida lawyer, Louise Mandell, is highly regarded for her knowledge of the law and her ability to convey that knowledge in the courtroom. Mandell, whose law firm earlier this year prepared a report for the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs that detailed flagrant irregularities in many of the questions government included in their provincial referendum, called the claim "ground breaking." Shell Canada, Petro-Canada and Chevron Canada hold the drilling rights to the area and have since the moratorium was re-established in 1972. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) say they'll be happy to drill for oil, but first, said Vice President David MacInnis, "it's up to the government and the public to get through the discussions on the moratorium. If they want to open the area up, we'll be glad to come."

MacInnis told media that the leaseholders remain "interested" in the prospect of development if the ban is lifted, but added that for the moment they are content to "wait until the process plays itself out."

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Be A Part of It...

Saluting Native Education

U of A offers exceptional School of Native Studies

by John Copley

The University of Alberta's, School of Native Studies, established in 1986, offers students one of the most comprehensive post-secondary Native Studies programs available today. The school, which cultivates a complete and integrative study of Aboriginal experiences in each of its courses, offers a Bachelor of Arts (BA), BA (Honors) and a combined BA and Bachelor of Education (BA-Ed.) program as well as three innovative minors, Human Ecology, Business and Environmental and Conservation Sciences.

With exams just around the corner, School of Native Studies Director Dr. Frank Tough, is wrapping up another school year, which will see about 18 graduates. "This year we have about 240 students enrolled and it looks like we'll have a similar figure enrolled for September's 2003 program," said Tough in a recent interview. "We are always eager to hear from students interested in pursuing an education in Native Studies and we do have some room left for our September programs."

Applicants with a first undergraduate degree qualify for admittance to the BA (Native Studies) after-degree program. Students must meet all of the requirements of the BA (Native Studies) degree, but the total number of required courses for the After Degree may be reduced by a maximum of 60 credits ("60"). The combined Native Studies BA/B.Ed. degree program consists of ("150") overall. The first three years ("90") are taken in the School of Native Studies and the last two years ("60") are taken in the Faculty of Education. Students in this Combined Degree program may choose a Cree Major or a Native Studies Major. Cree can also be a minor in the elementary route.

The BA NS Honors degree provides further specialization within the Native Studies program.

"The Honors program enables students to study in greater depth, and demands a higher standard of performance, than the BA NS program," explained Tough, adding that Honors program "provides excellent preparation for graduate study, especially in Native Studies."

The BSc (Environmental and Conservation Sciences) / BA (Native Studies) Combined Degree "is a five-year program that provides students with a strong background in both academic disciplines and is a means for them to specialize in the management of Aboriginal resources."

To gain admission to this program students can apply to either the School of Native Studies or the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics.

This degree program requires 150 credits to fulfil both degree requirements. Students admitted to the Combined Degree program by the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics will remain in that Faculty for the duration of their program. Students admitted by The School of Native Studies will remain in Native Studies for the duration of their program.

The five year, two-degree program offers "a better academic understanding of the Aboriginal use of resources," which can help prepare students to work effectively in various contexts where knowledge of Aboriginal and Treaty rights and issues is required.

"This Combined Degree between Environmental and Conservation Sciences

and Native Studies is a means for students to specialize in the management of Aboriginal resources," explained Tough, who added that the "program is open to both Native and non-Native applicants and enrolment management procedures of the School of Native Studies and the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics will apply for all years of the program."

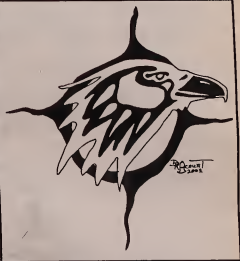
Promoting research designed to be beneficial to Aboriginal communities, the School of Native Studies offers more than an education, it offers its students an opportunity to pursue employment in a field of their choice because graduates will be among the best trained and most knowledgeable in the nation. Graduates from the School often pursue professional and advanced degrees, while many others work in Native communities.

The School of Native Studies has several major initiatives, including those that either create or execute community-based research projects and those that are designed to develop new strategies for recruiting, retaining and maintaining the student enrolment target. The School also maintains, develops and extends international connections that have been established as a result of hosting the Canadian Indigenous/Native Studies Association conference.

Director Frank Tough left the University of Saskatchewan in 1998 to take up his current post with the School of Native Studies but also holds adjunct positions (Rural Economy and Renewable Resources) in the U of A's Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics. An avid speaker, researcher, writer and project team participant with a variety of experiences and credits to his name, Tough is known for his tenacity in dealing with issues he deems viable and important to Aboriginal people and their communities. One such project involves land claims issues for the Metis peoples of Saskatchewan.

"I've been working with archives on the subject for more than 20 years now," explained Tough, who in 1999 began to spearhead a project entitled the *Metis Aboriginal Title Research Initiative - X (matriline-X)*, a unique investigative project that is studying the historical land use of the Metis in northwestern Saskatchewan. The project is also looking into the federal scrip policies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Continued on page 20



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Students produce exceptional artwork

by H.C. Miller

Students at two central Alberta schools are being provided with a variety of options in their educational pursuits and art is proving to be a popular one. Doreen Curniski is a contract art teacher who travels to teach approximately 300 young scholars at the Sunchild school and another 120 at the neighbouring O'Chiese school, located about five miles apart near Rocky Mountain House.

"Even the very youngest are enthusiastic about these classes," says Curniski. "Their work shows a lot of talent, and they catch onto the concepts very quickly," she says.

Art is important because it is everywhere, says the teacher, who graduated from the University of Calgary with a bachelor degree in fine arts in 2000. "Art is used to create the symbols we see, the cars we drive, the clothes we wear. It's everywhere," she says. "People don't realize that learning about art is so much more than a career as an artist - it is ingrained in many occupations." Architects, auto makers, clothing designers - they are all using artistic principles. And of course, it's a creative outlet that they can master quickly, she says. "They get satisfaction and pride in their work very early into the instruction, and it makes their self-esteem grow."

Two of the many students who have captured the concept of art are Kelly Mooswa, a Grade 8 student from the O'Chiese school, and Matthew Gopher, who is in Grade 10 at Sunchild. "Look at this work, known as mark-making, and you can see how they've created a 3-D effect, an illusion of distance on a flat piece of paper. They are very powerful and strong and it tells what they want to say," she says.

Kelly and Matthew, along with the other students, will take these skills into their adult lives. For example, fashions and home decor are two areas that the girls apply what they've learned on a practical basis, she says. Curniski starts the students off working with the colours blue, yellow and red, and the other colours are mixed from these three, she explains.

School officials at both locations are very supportive of the art and other options available to their students. "For instance, having these options available often encourages the older ones to keep attending when they might otherwise be tempted to drop out," she says. Each school year is divided into three-month period quadrants and enhanced by a special project, such as the artwork. They also learn shop-work and different options in other quadrants. "This is my second year with the students, so we've been building on what they learned last year, and I'll also be continuing in the 2002-2003 academic year as well," she says. Curniski is also a graduate of Red Deer College's Art and Design Diploma program. Her paintings hang in galleries in Canada, the USA, Australia, England and Europe.

The two Cree communities are located about 45 miles west of Rocky Mountain House. Both schools offer education for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Although they operate independently, they join together for sporting and other recreational pursuits.

"All in all, I'm finding the students very talented and willing to work, and I know they will use these skills throughout their lives," she concludes.



Bear drawn by O'Chiese student Kelly Mooswa



Eagle Emblem drawn by Sunchild student Matthew Gopher

Literacy is for Aboriginal Success

The ultimate form of First Nations literacy programs is a "two way" system of basic and lifelong education in which Aboriginal language and knowledge play as significant a role as the languages and knowledge of the surrounding society.

Canada's Aboriginal population was not factored into the Canadian figures for the International Adult Literacy Survey conducted in 1994/96. This study revealed that almost 50 percent of Canadian adults can't work well with words and numbers. The reality is that Canada's Aboriginal peoples have even lower literacy rates. This disadvantage is compounded by the inter-connectedness of literacy to poverty, poor health and high unemployment and crime rates.

Aboriginal literacy is a complex issue, involving the need to heal, and to reclaim identity, language, culture, and self-determination. Over the past decade, many Aboriginal organizations have done research and made recommendations about these issues. The following statement of beliefs embodies some common principles about Aboriginal literacy.

The Alberta Association for Adult Literacy believes in:

- a learner-centred approach to literacy skills development which links literacy to real issues in learners' lives. This allows the learner to set learning goals ensuring respect for and empowerment of the learner.
- a community-based approach in which Aboriginal people identify their own educational needs and develop solutions to the literacy issue within their communities, drawing on some of the traditional strengths and wisdom of Aboriginal communities;
- a holistic approach to skills development ensuring the individual is respected as a whole person who is part of a family, a community and a Nation,
- program diversity and a variety of teaching method options reflecting the wide diversity of Aboriginal Nations providing literacy services;
- a culturally based approach to literacy training that ensures respect for the learner and takes into account prior learning and experiences;
- literacy training that incorporates skills development in Aboriginal languages and traditions;
- literacy training that considers the need for increased interactions between Natives and non-Natives on an equal basis.

There are many examples of successful Aboriginal literacy initiatives in action. Here are a few:

Native literacy groups have developed a curriculum for adults with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; a training model for Aboriginal literacy peer and community

Continue on page 20



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A message from Chief Sheldon Kent; Nelson Bird, Administration; Councillors Charlie Black, Warren Bird, Jonas Peebles; Members and Elders

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Business Career College expands facilities, programs in Grande Prairie

by John Copley

Grande Prairie's Business Career College is bigger and better than ever now that the institute, located in the city's Career Building, has expanded both in size and in program availability.

"It's wonderful to have the extra space," said Cibylla Rakestraw, one of the partners in the northern college, during a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*. "It's also a real bonus to be able to offer even more programs to our students because of the expansion."

When the Business Career College (BCC) first opened its doors in 1990 it did so with just one program, one classroom and no computers. There have been a lot of changes since those days but Rakestraw says the changes during the past 12 years have been gradual and very successful. By utilizing a system that allows just 15 students per class, the College puts out graduates who are ready for the workforce. In fact, most BCC graduates step right into meaningful positions.

"We are very proud of the fact that most of our graduates are successfully employed," said Rakestraw, who added that "last year, for example, our Office Administration Program had a 96 percent placement rate of graduates working full time within three months of graduation." Rakestraw, who also teaches at the College, says most of the success shared by the students comes from quality instruction and teachers who care.

"Our instructors are professionals with real-world experience in what they're teaching," she assured. "They provide excellent instruction but even more important, they share their time, their knowledge and their experience with their students. The bottom line is that we're here to prepare people for the job market and we want both our staff and our courses to be as practical and as real as they possibly can be."

The increased office space and a brand new classroom are among the contributing factors to the College's introduction this past year of two new full time Diploma Programs.

"We introduced a new Financial Services Diploma Program as well as a Travel and Tourism Diploma Program," explained Cibylla Rakestraw. "The Financial Services program has been specifically designed to prepare students for careers in the investment, insurance and banking industry. We are also working with numerous tourism and travel companies and have discovered that there is an increasing demand for qualified people in this industry."

Somewhat unique in Canada, the Business Career College's Financial Services program has been receiving a great deal of attention. Large multinational organizations such as Clarica and Investors Group have indicated that they'd be interested in having similar programs delivered in other parts of the country.

"We have so many employers waiting for the graduates of our program it's incredible," said Rakestraw. "One hundred percent of our first year grads were employed almost immediately; that's an average that we'd like to maintain."



The Travel and Tourism Diploma Program began in March of this year. Rakestraw noted that in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attack in New York and Washington, there was some concern about the future of the travel and tourism industry.

But after hearing from the industry, she's put that concern aside.

"We have been working with travel agencies such as the AMA, Trumpeter Travel, Marlin Travel and Travelandlers," she explained. "Through our affiliation and friendship we've come to learn that these companies and others are continually looking for qualified people, educated in the travel business."

The Travel and Tourism program, says Rakestraw, follows in the wake of many other BCC programs.

The program includes national certification through ACCESS, an organization that is jointly owned by the

ees and developing programs in consultation with employers is a big part of our long-term success," explained Cibylla Rakestraw. "We welcome any company or organization interested in providing their staff with added education to call us for a consultation. We can and do develop personal programs for both groups and individuals."

Licensed through Alberta Learning, the Business Career College offers training to approximately 120 students each year.

"Because most of our students are adult learners we want to be able to fit people's lives and schedules together in a way that allows them time to accomplish all of their goals," closed Rakestraw. "That's why we are able to take on new students every couple of months." For more information call at (780) 532-5999. Long distance callers dial toll free 1-877-532-5999.

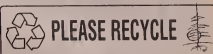


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Thinking of my teachers

by Xavier Katakapiit

Recently I heard from an old teacher of mine. Rhonda McKay dropped me a line on e-mail from Thunder Bay where she is now teaching and living. Her contact reminded me of just how important teachers are in my life. I mean all the teachers, those who do it as a profession and also those that simply have taught me because they love me.

In my home community of Attawapiskat on the James Bay coast my parents taught me and my brothers and sisters from an early age how to live on the land.

When I was young my mom Susan and my dad Marius took the family out just about every weekend during the summers to visit the islands on the bay. We spent hours walking pebble stone beaches and learned where to find berries of different varieties growing in the shallow soil along the beach. In the wintertime, my parents also took the time to take us outdoors and teach us how to live in cold weather conditions. At any time of the year we were taught how to find the right compass, how to set up camp, where to find wood for a fire and how to make a fire. Of course I also learned how to hunt and provide food for the family. I guess to sum it up my parents taught me how to survive on the land. If ever I am left in a situation with no modern conveniences and I have to make do with very little, I can survive.

It was also good for all my family to spend time with our ancestors on the land in natural settings and without the distractions of the community. These trips on the land were opportunities to learn more about our Cree language. We communicated in our language all the time when living on the land and our parents taught us more of the older traditional Cree.

Like every young boy in my community, I learned the Cree language first and was taught the English language later when I attended elementary school. I was fortunate to have several good teachers who took

extra time to help me learn more about the greater world outside my community. These teachers in my early life made a big impact on me and basically encouraged me to believe in myself and to strive to become educated.

I also attended secondary school in Attawapiskat where I was fortunate to be taught by a bright young teacher, namely, Rhonda McKay. She was an enthusiastic teacher who always had time for all her students and she made our learning an enjoyable experience. One Christmas she coordinated we senior students to produce an original play. We wrote the play, built the props and performed it live on stage in the gymnasium for the entire community. It was a play based on the theme of solvent abuse and had a good message for everyone. It was a memorable experience to act out our own play on a stage in front of a large audience of community members and we finished to loud applause.

In more recent years I have benefited by the help of my brother's wife Christine.

She is a midwife and a nurse from Sherbrooke, Quebec. She worked in Attawapiskat for several years and felt that I had some talent for writing so she encouraged me at every opportunity to develop my skills. I still have a small library of books by First Nation people that she gave me.

More recently, I have had the opportunity to work with my good friend Mike who is a writer that I admire very much. Over the past few years he has helped me develop my skills of writing that include news and feature styles. He has also helped me with creative writing. As part of this teaching he and his mom Emily have also made me feel that I can achieve my goals here in the big world outside of my home community.

In the past few years I have been assisted by many prominent First Nation organizations.

Many people have encouraged me like Shawn Batise of Wabun Tribal Council, Darlene St. Denis-Lafontaine, who is now with Wabun; Rose Anna Campbell of Mamowich-Hetwin Employment & Training, and Diane Riepel of the Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre. All of these people, their organisations and their staff members have provided me with encouragement and a helping hand along my way.

I have had so many teachers in my life and they have all made a big difference in who I am. So today I am thinking about all of my teachers and how happy I am for the time and efforts they have given me.



U of A, continued from page 17

"There is quite a mass of records that are related to titles and tenures in Western Canada," acknowledged Dr. Tough, who says he estimates the files and records transferred to the provinces after the 1930 transfer of natural resources "to be in the millions."

Unfortunately, he adds, only about 30,000 of those files still remain intact in the National Archives.

Among a deluge of written and oral work presented over the years by Dr. Frank Tough is a book, *As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native People and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba*, released in 1996 by University of B.C. Press and a coauthored manuscript with Arthur Ray and Jim Miller, *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties*, published in 2000 by McGill and Queen's Press in Montreal. Other published work includes various articles/chapters on Aboriginal rights and the transfer of Rupert's Land; the economic policies of Indian Affairs after 1870; Indian economic behaviour, and the demise of Native fisheries and the commercialization of Indian sturgeon fisheries.

"I'd like to mention how proud we all are with the success of our Cree Language Program," closed Tough, who recommends a new book produced by Lorna L'Hirondelle, Marjorie Menmook, Sally Warr and Donna Paskemin entitled *Plains Cree Grammar Guide and Glossary*.

For more information about the University of Alberta's School of Native Studies or to get more information on application requirements and educational acceptability standards, contact the School by calling (780) 492-2991 or send a fax to (780) 492-0527. Email can be sent to bettyk@ualberta.ca or to nativest@ualberta.ca. You can also visit the School's website at www.ualberta.ca/NATIVESTUDIES.

Literacy for Success

continued from page 18

tutors; a tutor guide using oral history from local Elders; and a strategy for improving the quality of life for disabled Aboriginal people through literacy.

In a Manitoba prison literacy program, the teacher worked with Native students to rewrite the "Twelve Steps" in simple language, incorporating Native concepts and images to make it more inspiring and supportive to Native readers.

Another program designed a special curriculum for learners who wanted to help their children in school. Parents learned how to support their children in doing their homework, and how to prepare themselves for parent-teacher interviews.

For more information about Aboriginal literacy, contact the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy in Calgary at (403) 297-4994, phone the Literacy Help Line of Alberta at 1-800-767-3231 or visit www.nald.ca/aal.htm.

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Nova Scotia student looks ahead to bright future

by H. C. Miller

Jean-Pierre d'Entremont has three more years of university studies before he will graduate with a bachelor's degree in commerce, but he doesn't find the idea at all daunting. He finds his courses interesting and recognises that they are preparing him for a great future which will offer many possible employment positions.

Although he is attending St. Mary's University in Halifax, d'Entremont grew up in West Pubnico, a three-hour drive from the capital. "It's an Acadian community," he explains, adding that it's a very old settlement and that French, English and First Nations are all well represented. "I have a really rich heritage, and I'm very proud of it," he says.

His parents have been a major factor in his achievements at getting through his school years successfully and on to university. "They've encouraged me and my younger sister in all our endeavours," he says. However, he admits there was another big influence on him that kept him going when the sacrifices that all successful students have to make became laborious. "I didn't want to spend the rest of my life fishing," he says simply, noting that the main occupation in the community of West Pubnico is employment in the fishing industry.

Choosing a career was made easier by the fact that he was never good in the sciences, but enjoyed math and most of the other courses he took in high school. The population of West Pubnico is about 2000 and it has only an elementary school, but he had no trouble earning the prerequisites for his university entrance at schools in neighbouring communities.

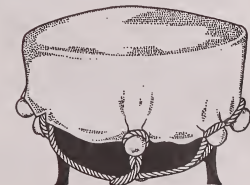
Plans for employment are somewhat unsure at this time. "My first year has been general introductory courses, and by my third year, I'll have to decide in which area to specialize," he explains. He is doing well in his subjects, which have included two math courses this year. "Statistics and Economics are among those to be taken next year," he says. Possible careers could be chief financial officer or one of many other management positions in banking or commerce. "St. Mary's has a great reputation for preparing commerce students for the work world," he says. "McLean's magazine has rated it one of the best business schools in Canada."

To other students who may be tempted to drop out of school, d'Entremont says simply, "Don't do it, even if you are having problems. Keep on trying. Get help if you need it." He had a few trials along the way himself. "I had to get tutors from time to time to help me when I was having difficulties. I had to work hard to get my university entrance, but it was worth it. I made it."

D'Entremont will be helped with financial costs this year by successfully applying for an education award from the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC). The institution assists five Aboriginal, Inuit or Metis students across Canada annually with \$4000 towards post-secondary education expenses in disciplines related to, but not restricted to, the financial industry. Students must maintain a full course workload leading to a recognized degree, certificate or diploma, maintain a full course load attendance, and receive good academic standing.

Keith MacDonald, national manager of Aboriginal banking, says that RBC has

NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH ©



CHRISTOPHER HARVEY, CHAMBAUD, 2002.

awarded 49 scholarships totalling \$376,000 since the awards were first presented in 1993. "It is our hope that by investing in the bright future of these individuals, we will help create strong, positive role models for future generations of Aboriginal youth."

DIRECTOR OF PENT

Brandon University is a leader in providing high-quality education to over 2,000 full- and part-time students in arts, sciences, education, music, and health studies. Based in southwestern Manitoba, Brandon University also offers pre-professional and Masters programs, as well as innovative and award-winning outreach programs in a personalized learning environment.

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The Faculty operates a number of teacher-education programs which are designed to meet the needs of schools in specific regions of the province as well as providing access for specific groups of people. The Program for the Education of Native Teachers (PENT) is seeking to fill the position of Director. This is a probationary (tenure-track) position.

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Kehewin Native Performance readies for Fourth Annual Youth Conference

by John Copley

On May 16-17 the Kehewin First Nation near Bonnyville, Alberta will host its Fourth Annual Aboriginal Youth Conference, a joint effort initiated by the Kehewin First Nation Education Centre and the popular Kehewin Native Performance and Resource Network (KNPRN). "This year's conference, *Kisteyitohwin 2002, Respect: A Balance of Life*, will focus on both self respect and global respect," explained organizer and Native Cultural Fine Arts Instructor, Rosa John. "The conference," she added, "will concentrate on delivering important messages about the priorities our youth need to put on self respect and how this can be accomplished by getting involved with positive lifestyles and learning to make positive choices."

Self-respect and the many satisfying derivatives that come with it are obtained much the same way any success is attained, through involvement, planning and networking with others who share the same or similar goals.

"The feedback we get from the community both during and after our annual conferences has been overwhelming," said Rosa John, who with husband Melvin, organizes, coordinates and hosts the popular event. "Most of the people we hear from can't wait until the next conference and it's particularly gratifying to see that the work we do actually has a positive and lasting effect."

John offered a couple of examples of after-conference accomplishments. "The youth at the Kikino Metis Settlement attended our first conference and as a result created a music group," said John. "The next year they attended they returned home and established a theatre group. This year the group will again be attending the conference and this time they'll be putting on a play. The coordinator at Kikino, Delilah Dwyer, has done a remarkable job; it would be perfect if every community in the country had someone as dedicated and as hard working as Delilah."

Another Alberta group that's benefited from the KNPRN conferences are the youth from the Saddle Lake First Nation. They're returning this year and will also put on a play. "Their play deals with the subject of addictions, particularly gambling addictions, and will give the audience an inside look at the choices, the consequences and the need to steer clear of these types of obstacles."

Along with the conference, KNPRN will once again be joined by numerous achievers and youth who have made positive choices in the realms of theatre, music, dance, film, literature, self-defense and health. These students will join the conference to share their stories and talents with youth from all over Alberta and Saskatchewan. Adult mentors will also be on hand to share their expertise in fields that include substance abuse prevention, traditional and contemporary music and health and healing.

International guests from as far away as Mexico, Indonesia and New Zealand will also attend the conference to share their cultures and create networking opportunities with Canadian youth.

"We hope we can live up to last year's comments about the conference," said John, remembering the rave reviews that summed up the 2001 symposium as "the best youth conference in northeastern Alberta." The Kehewin First Nation Education Centre and KNPRN have made a big success of working together to



enhance education and lifestyle choices for Alberta's youth. That the work they do spills over into other provinces and even other countries, makes it all the better, says Rosa John, who with husband Melvin, founded KNPRN in 1991.

"Youth represent the future of our nations; they are our greatest resource," she said, "and it is important that they are afforded every opportunity possible. Learning through creation and self-expression builds self-esteem and helps to create positive choices. By sharing talents, goals, ideals and aspirations with others, youth grow stronger and more secure within themselves and that's an important ingredient to a happy and successful life."

Since its inception KNPRN has taken a leadership role in its attempt to create awareness, dispel myths, educate youth and put a smile on the faces of the many hundreds of children, youth and adults that they meet and perform for every year. Initially a small theatre group that toured local and regional schools, KNPRN is now taking their messages to the world, sharing their ideas, their philosophies, their culture and their concerns with Indigenous communities around the world.

The May 16-17 *Kisteyitohwin 2002, Respect: A Balance of Life* conference gets underway with prayer, a pipe ceremony and a host of knowledgeable and experienced keynote conference speakers. Once again the conference will place special emphasis on motivating youth to involve themselves in positive lifestyles. To aid in this goal the conference will host a series of back-by-popular-demand, Community Action Plan workshops that this year will include Native actors, environmentalists, directors, writers, web page designers, filmmakers, dancers, musicians and more. "We will also be hosting a theatre festival of youth theatre companies from Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia," said John. "The feedback we've received from previous festivals has been more than encouraging, in fact, we'd categorize the exchange of ideas, philosophies and talents that these young people share as a 'truly momentous' occasion. Six different theatre companies will be here to participate."

Also back by popular demand, said John are the Aztec Dancers. "This year we will also be joined by a group of Aztec youth who are now making their home in Colorado. The group, Oelokuuuhli, will be here to both share their experiences and to perform - they are also very entertaining dancers."

In addition to a variety of entertainers from across western Canada, conference-goers will also be treated to the words and wisdom of a group of Mauri storytellers, who travel to the event all the way from New Zealand. The very popular and very unique ensemble of Inuit drummers and dancers, Pamyua, will also perform. The multifaceted conference will also host a powwow and a Much Music Dance.

"We're going to have a lot of fun again this year," predicted John, "but I'd like to encourage schools to pre-register as quickly as possible. We're limiting this year's event to 500 youth; this is how many we feel we can safely accommodate."

Conference host KNPRN provides a wide range of theatre and group-building workshops for youth and communities. In addition to two-hour sessions that include games, improvisations and theatre techniques, the company also provides the full theatre series as a two day intensive or one week workshop where they offer virtually everything from physical and vocal work to character development for plays and choreographies. The various aspects of mask making and puppetry are also included in the full sessions as are discussions about problem solving, creating harmony in the workplace, learning how to share ideas and understanding the concepts and relevance of theatre techniques.

For more information about the Kehewin Native Performance and Resource Network and to find out more about the upcoming *Kisteyitohwin 2002, Respect: A Balance of Life* Conference contact Rosa or Melvin John by calling 1-780-826-6044. A balance can be directed to kmprn@telusplanet.net.

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Banking industry experience helps in career choice

by H. C. Miller

When Destiny Elcock attends the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg in September, she'll be embarking on a choice of studies to which she has aspired for a long time. "I've already had experience working for two summers for the Royal Bank of Canada, and will be returning again this summer," she says. "I really enjoy people and I believe a career in banking will provide me with lots of opportunity to work personally with clients." She also realizes that in order to get ahead in life, students leaving high school today must go on to further education and training at a post-secondary institution in order to earn an adequate income.

Elcock will start her university experience with a year in the arts faculty, taking general interest courses before specializing in commerce and economics. With tuition and living costs soaring she was pleased to learn she had been successful in applying for a scholarship of \$4000 annually, for the four years of her university, from the Royal Bank. "The Royal Bank has been a really big help, first with summer employment which not only gave me experience to see if this was the right career for me, but also with this award," she says.

Elcock grew up in the small Manitoba community of Lundar. Her mother's family lives on the Saultaux Reserve at Fairford, about an hour's drive from Lundar, and she spent many weekends and summers there. "Then when I started Grade 10, we moved to Winnipeg," she says. Her mom, dad, and older brother have always been supportive and have helped and encouraged her along the way. "My mom and dad are from big families and it's been great to have everyone offering moral support," she says. Moving to the city was difficult, and she misses the friendly, down-home feeling of the smaller rural community, and being unable to visit at Fairford as often as she would like.

Throughout her high school years she has seen classmates drop out and fail to complete high school. "I've never been tempted to quit, because my summer employment experience has shown me how the world of work is attainable and enjoyable. I want a good life for myself, a good future, and the way to do that is to work in a promising career," she says.

A high school teacher, Miss Sinclair, was also an inspiration to Elcock. "She encouraged me to apply to the Royal Bank for work, and for the scholarship, and was always interested in my progress," she says. Her favourite subjects in high school have been English, Applied Math and Chemistry.

In the future, Elcock hopes to work close to home. "There are lots of opportunities right here in Manitoba." She'd like to move back into a rural area to live and work, and maybe raise a family someday.

Keith MacDonald is national manager of Aboriginal banking for Royal Bank of Canada. He notes that the Native Student Award Program is just one of many initiatives that RBC operates in an effort to continue its long-standing relationship with the Aboriginal community. "Our support is directed to programs for youth, training, education, and economic development," he says. These programs include encouraging students in Grade 9 to stay in school, supporting Native Friendship Centres across Canada, and fostering Junior Achievement projects offered at schools across Canada, among many others. RBC also considers



students such as Elcock for summer and postgraduate employment if they are interested in pursuing a banking career.

To other high school students who may think they'll never proceed to university or college, Elcock says simply, "Hang in there." She says they'll never be sorry if they work to overcome their difficulties. "If I can do it, they can do it."

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A model of First Nations education success

by Paul Boyd

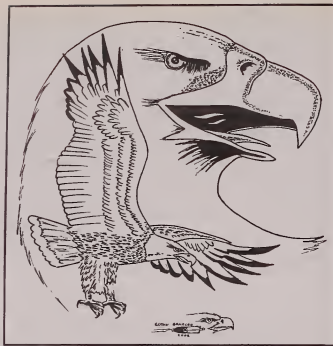
I have been a teacher at Seabird Island Community School for five years. I have found my experiences at Seabird very rewarding, and have become very proud of the students here and the successes they have achieved. Seabird Island Community School is the only fully accredited First Nations Independent School in B.C. Seabird Island High School was established in the fall of 1998. Until that time the school enrolled only students in grades K - 10. The education committee's mandate was to create an accredited Adult Education program that would lead to an adult Dogwood Graduate certificate. Two teachers were hired at that time to teach and implement the necessary curriculum. As with many new endeavours, we quickly learned that the task at hand would be much more complicated. Before the ministry of education would certify an Adult Education program, an existing high school program already had to be in place. In order to meet the requirements of an adult program, Seabird Island School would have to become a K-12 school immediately.

In 1997 there were about 10 students in a Grade 9/10 class. Previously, the trend had been for the students to leave S.I.C.S. and begin attending Agassiz Secondary, a short bus ride away. Unfortunately many students did not make the adjustment very well. Many were placed on modified programs that led to leaving school certificates not Dogwood graduation, others just drifted away. S.I.C.S. gave the students who had reached grade 10 another option, as well as the students in Agassiz that were not doing so well.

The 1998 school year started with 13 students in one class of grades 8-11. Teaching the complete range of core subjects to such a wide range of abilities was certainly a challenge, but the small class size made it manageable. The principal and I discussed what sort of timetable would be best for our students. We decided to go with a modified semester timetable. Electives would actually be more of a challenge, but we were able to utilize some local band members to help teach culturally relevant subjects. The local Halqemelem language and culture were also taught. It was quickly becoming evident that we were doing something right as enrolment actually increased in the class throughout the year, finishing with 18 students. Quite the opposite of what seemed to be the trend in the public schools.

The most important thing for us to do was to break the cycle of repeated failure. To do this each student was assessed, using primarily KTEA, to help identify the students' strengths and weaknesses. Once a starting level was determined for the students, they were encouraged to progress at their own rate. Although each course was adapted to meet their individual needs, the content remained intact and courses were generally not modified. This was an important distinction, as an adapted course still allowed the students to move towards graduation whereas a modified course would not.

There are many external circumstances facing the majority of the students that have an enormous impact on their ability to perform. The standard expectations that are placed on students in public schools are quite simply unrealistic, and a



formula for failure. Using a mastery model allows the students to experience many small successes as the progress towards graduation. We have even had a number of students that were on a modified IEP in the public school who were able to switch back to a regular program and find success. Adapting courses does not mean that the school has become less structured. There are less activities occurring on a daily basis, but there is a lot of routine. Students know where they are supposed to be at a given time and what is expected. First Nations students need structure and expectations just like any other student. Lowering expectations is counter-productive, students need to know what the expectations are or they will not know when they have arrived.

Teaching at Seabird Island is nothing like what I was taught at University. It is necessary to fill many roles here: educator, counsellor, role model, mentor, parent, and friend. A strong rapport is always important with students, but with First Nations students it is even more so. If we expect them to open up to us, to take some risks, we have to demonstrate to them that we really do care and that we are willing to open up to them as well. Everything really does build on mutual respect. This unique situation means that it is not for everyone. The teachers have to be willing to share more of themselves and work within the student's agenda not just their own.

This is now the fourth year of the High School program at Seabird Island School. Enrolment is now at forty-two students. We have had three graduates and expect to have two more this year, with more in the coming years as the upper grades become more and more populated. There are now three full time teachers working with the students, and a SAP (student achievement program) for those students that are on a modified program or working their way back into a classroom setting after being away for a number of years.

Seabird has only a few graduates so far, but we expect more and more each year. So far one grad is working in massage therapy, another for Hewlett Packard in Seattle, and the other is interested in pursuing a computer career.

In the high school this year, two students have been selected to attend Forum for Young Canadians, a week long conference held in Ottawa, which studies the processes and function of the federal government. It is quite an honour to be selected to this conference, with only 50 students going from BC and 130 applicants.

My time at Seabird Island High School has been very rewarding, both professionally and in terms of witnessing first hand the accomplishments of the students. To know that the students are all progressing: academically, socially, and emotionally; and that the best is yet to come for them is tremendously gratifying.

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book review

Akak'stiman, A Blackfoot Framework for Decision Making and Mediation Processes

by Reg Crowshoe and Sybille Manneschildt
Published by University of Calgary Press
Review by John Copley

If timeliness is a trait synonymous with success, it's also a simile that can be linked to the University of Calgary Press, a leader, especially when it comes to releasing material that offers educational value to the general public while at the same time enhancing an image and paying tribute to the lifestyles of Canada's Native peoples. Once again the University of Calgary Press has set the precedent for a new type of education, a new type of learning. *Alberta Native News* recently received a copy of their newest book, *Akak'stiman, A Blackfoot Framework for Decision Making and Mediation Processes*, recently released in Canada. Though the book was first published in 1997 and reprinted again in 1998, this new version is a must for everyone who has the first release and a necessity for anyone studying or wishing to know more about the Peigan Nation, its people and the Blackfoot Circle it represents.

Akak'stiman is a Blackfoot term that means 'law-making.' The term relates 'to the one annual event in the seasonal cycle of Blackfoot culture when all people come together to celebrate the Sun Dance ceremony and witness the making and enforcement of their laws.' The term goes back a long time through history, but the relevance of the Sun Dance is still important and remains an integral part of spiritual ceremonies throughout many of the Blackfoot nations, even though the event no longer unites the clans and has lost its socially unifying attributes. Like all First Nations historians, the Blackfoot understand the importance of recording history so that the Sun Dance and the many other ceremonies that for years have bound their peoples in unity and common theme will never be forgotten or denied. The ceremonies will live on, just as long as there are people as

dedicated to putting the facts on paper as Akak'stiman co-authors, Reg Crowshoe and Sybille Manneschildt.

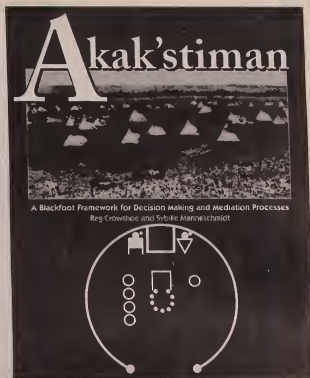
Readers who buy a copy of Akak'stiman will find the rewards far greater than the few dollars they'll have to spend on it. If fate is fair this book is destined for every library in the land - every school too. That's because in 1991, when Elders of the Peigan Nation gathered to discuss the seriousness of the health situation in their community, their worries were heard and acted on. Those early discussions led to a program that became known as the "Keep Our Circle Strong Project," a program designed around the circle, perhaps the most significant shape in the Blackfoot world. The formation of that project was the start of a new beginning of health and social awareness, and one that developed even further. Today the project has evolved into what is known as the Blackfoot Circle Structure Process. Based on both ethnographic research and historical records, the project has quickly become the venue that "translates" traditional Blackfoot concepts and applies that knowledge to the present-day life of the Peigan people.

Author Reg Crowshoe, involved in the project since its inception, has also been a key figure in the translation and implementation of the resource material. He has also been involved in various applications of the project which have been put into practice during the past several years. The book, Akak'stiman, however, is the first time that the Blackfoot Circle Structure Process has been put on paper for others, outside the Peigan Nation, to be able to read and understand.

Health administration, child protection mediation services and the corporate decision-making process are all discussed at length in Akak'stiman. The themes, the processes and the Blackfoot way of life may sound like a complicated world that would be difficult to comprehend, but Crowshoe and coauthor Manneschildt have done a remarkable job of writing the material and putting it together in such a way as to allow every English-speaking person the ability to

not only read and understand their work, but also to enjoy what they read as they learn about the inner and important teachings of the Peigan Nation and the Blackfoot-speaking groups that reside primarily in southern Alberta. *Akak'stiman, A Blackfoot Framework for Decision Making and Mediation Processes* is informative, easy-to-read, and dotted throughout with photos, illustrations and graphs for clarity and a better visual perception. A large Appendix and a huge Notes section are added for even better understanding and cross-reference and will be a real bonus for researchers and/or students studying Blackfoot culture or Peigan lifestyle. The 10-chapter breakdown offered throughout the first half of the 95 page manuscript, however, offers enough data to quench the driest thirst and answer the toughest questions.

Akak'stiman, A Blackfoot Framework for Decision Making and Mediation Processes is now available - look for it or contact the University of Calgary Press, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N1 for a copy.



A Blackfoot Framework for Decision Making and Mediation Processes
Reg Crowshoe and Sybille Manneschildt

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Akak'stiman

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Justice Behind the Walls

Human Rights in Canadian Prisons

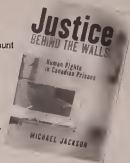
by Michael Jackson

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book review

Justice Behind the Walls

... Human Rights in Canadian Prisons

Written by Michael Jackson
Published by Douglas & McIntyre ISBN: 1-55054-893-X
Review by John Copley

When you hear the name Michael Jackson, you might think of an American rock singer. When hear the name mentioned in the same sentence as Douglas & McIntyre, however, you just know you're in for a treat. That's because when you hear that the latter has a new nonfiction book on the market and Jackson is the author, you know it will be the best reading you've done in some time. Such is the case with the popular Vancouver-based book company's newest release, *Justice Behind the Walls, Human Rights in Canadian Prisons*, another book by Jackson that not only sheds light on the often dark and archaic conditions and attitudes in the Canadian prison system, but one that is also designed to open eyes and perhaps even the minds of those responsible for setting laws and policies for the nation's penal system.

Jackson, who before writing *Justice Behind the Walls, Human Rights in Canadian Prisons* also penned *Locking Up Natives In Canada and Prisoners of Isolation: Solitary Confinement in Canada*, has spent much of his life dedicated to the pursuit of a true sense of justice. His latest book, which required many months and unimaginable hours of interviewing, researching and recording, will offer insight to those who have never seen the inside of a prison and encouragement to those who have. Appointed Queen's Counsel in 1999 as acknowledgement for his work and his contributions to the protection of human rights in Canada, Jackson's work is a must read for every conscientious Canadian and for every person who believes in justice and judicial reform.

Jackson's book is a true tale of life in jail and readers will find it's a far cry from the Hollywood version they're used to dealing with on television. *Justice Behind the Walls, Human Rights in Canadian Prisons* is coercive, intense, torturous and yet compassionate in ways that allow the reader to get inside the thoughts and the actions of both prisoners and their jailers. Frankly written and boldly told, this new Douglas & McIntyre release exposes the reality of the contemporary justice system in Canada. Jackson provides several pages near the end of the book to capture the essence of what has yet to be done to correct a system that in itself is as corrupt as it is valiant, where decisions are made at the spur of the moment and where Native prisoners not only represent the majority, but are also the most discriminated against, a fact that is prevalent both in the courtroom and in the jail system.

Jackson quotes dozens of interviews and numerous vignettes offered by prisoners and others which reveal meaningful insight into the prison system and the justice system, sometimes flawed but seldom apologetic.

Justice Behind the Walls, Human Rights in Canadian Prisons is a difficult book to decipher for others because each individual who reads it will take some-

Justice

BEHIND THE WALLS

Human Rights
in Canadian Prisons



thing different from it. But one thing most will agree on is the fact that the current system running our nation's jails is not just, is not fair, is not humane, is not for the 21st Century. Changes for the better have been made, but those changes are infrequent and inconsistent and most times do not brace the underworld philosophies that reign supreme in Canada's jails.

Buy this book and read it from cover to cover - only then will you have a true understanding of what it means to be a prisoner, especially a long-serving prisoner, in Canada. Though not every jail in the country operates the same or has the same jailers, much of what you read in *Justice Behind the Walls, Human Rights in Canadian Prisons*, you will abhor. The conscientious will quickly realize that what happens in one jail is likely to be happening in others.

To effect change, especially the change that is needed to turn the Canadian penal system into an institution with an environment conducive to reform, the public must get involved. They must speak out and demand accountability, demand a reckoning of success and failure. So far that has not happened; that prospect lies with you.

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Focus on Tourism

Seabird Island Festival includes cultural component

by H. C. Miller

The Seabird Island First Nation, located in British Columbia's southwest corner about 146 kilometres from Vancouver, is once again hosting its annual festival, but this year promises to be bigger and better than ever. "As usual, the festival will offer sporting events such as baseball, soccer, ball hockey and war canoe races. As well, there will be arts and crafts, a youth dance and a gospel music jamboree," explains Angie Chapman, Festival Co-ordinator.

However, the organizers are especially excited about the cultural component that they have added this year. "We have been improving and modifying the event ever since it began 33 years ago," she says. While the open traditional bone game called Slihal has been a popular feature in past festivals, a variety of cultural demonstrations and entertainment has been added for the enjoyment of the hundreds of visitors from Canada and the United States who

regularly attend the three-day event. Basket making, weaving, and soapstone carving, are among the new cultural offerings. "Powwow dancers will be demonstrating," she says, "and drumming and singing will be featured as well." These additions will provide visitors the opportunity to learn more about the culture and history of the Seabird Island First Nation. Numerous children's activities such as face-painting and balloons will round out the fun.

There is plenty of healthy competition among the teams. Lots of good food has always been enjoyed by visitors as well, with costs kept low so everyone can join in.

The Seabird Island people, who are associated with the Stoiko First Nation, are a community of just 700 members. "About half of us are actively involved as volunteers throughout the event," Chapman says. As well, outside groups often pitch in and lend much-appreciated help.

The first festival was held in 1968 and was just a one-day event in July. "Too many other events were happening about the same time, so it was moved to May," she explains. It was expanded to two days, then three as more and more activities were added. "Now the ball hockey and baseball start on Friday night."

Craft artisans from outside the community are encouraged to be vendors at the arts and crafts exhibits by renting a table. "It's hoped a great variety of work will be available, and of course commercial vendors are always welcome too," she says.

In past years over 7000 people have attended, and Chapman expects more this year. "We have news of several bus tours which are coming in, and we've been doing lots of publicity, so the word is out. The non-First Na-

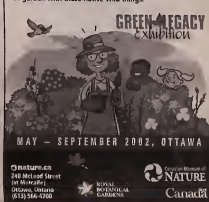
tions community supports and attends the event as well," she says.

Chapman says readers interested in attending the event get more information by viewing the website at www.seabirdland.ca. "There's guaranteed to be something for every age group and more activities are being added everyday."



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Chilliwack Powwow and its amazing journey

by Heather Andrews Miller

Ten years ago the students at the British Columbia community of Chilliwack began to plan a powwow. "They wanted something to share, to offer, to be a part of," explains Gwen Point. The students were aware of the lack of First Nations curriculum in the subject material they were studying and wished to recreate a part of their culture. They wanted the non-Native students and teachers in the community to see firsthand their unique First Nations culture and traditions.

Years of unjust laws and living in residential schools where generations of First Nations people were inhibited from practicing their language and cultural celebrations meant that only a few Elders remembered the time-honoured dances. "For example in my family, there were three generations who attended the residential school, with the last school here in the valley closing only as recently as 1969, which is not so long ago," she says. Diseases further decimated those who remembered the traditional culture. "In one Stolo Nation community smallpox wiped out 90 percent of the villagers."

The first-ever Chilliwack powwow was held in the school gymnasium, with the modest amount of \$11,000 raised to pay for hosting costs. "Five students, the school principal, and handful of parent, and myself as First Nations Support Worker managed to pull the initial one together," remembers Point. And it's continued to grow every year until today the powwow, which will be held April 19 to 21 this year, is a \$70,000 event which attracts up to 12,000 visitors.

"We moved to a new venue this year, which is more than twice the size to accommodate the participants we expect," she says. People come from all over the USA and Canada to attend the gathering. "This year our host drum group is from Minnesota, called the Midnight Express, and we've had calls from Montana, New Mexico, California, with more coming in every day," she explains. It's the first powwow of the season for the B.C. region, which experiences Spring a little earlier than some other parts of Canada.

The powwow gives children, families, and communities a chance to learn the different styles of dancing, as well as the traditional drumming and singing, explains Point. "It's been exciting to witness how this powwow has given our people an opportunity to return to our culture." But it's the cultural and economic impact on the 24 First Nations communities in the Stolo — which means River People — territory in the Fraser Valley that is especially exciting, says Point, who is the Chilliwack Powwow Society Chair. The

event fills up the hotels in the area and the local restaurants are very busy throughout the event. "We're a drug and alcohol-free event so it's a trouble-free, enjoyable time for everybody."

Volunteers are a huge part of the powwow's success. The event is possible because of 140-plus volunteers — students, local chiefs, and professionals of all ages, who volunteer time and energy by working in every position — from parking to set-up and take-down, to maintenance and sound systems," she says. As well, first aid, recycling, security and health and administration duties are accomplished to total over 13,000 man-hours to support the event. "It's pulled our communities together — everybody feels a part of it and has feelings of shared ownership. Non-Native folks in the area, which is located some 50 miles east of Vancouver, get involved too.

The hosting committee also recognizes the contribution of numerous sponsors — hotels and other businesses — as well as individuals. "We couldn't do it without them," says Point. The event features competition for dancers from the under-six group right up to seniors. There's also a hair-braiding contest, craft displays and a princess contest round out the additional events. Autopian Brokers has offered funding for the filming on videotape of the entire powwow. Their grant was part of the Autopian program which fosters safe driving practices," she explains. There will also be interviews taped with an Aboriginal constable, teacher, judge and a First Nations insurance adjuster. They are paying for all the interviewing and the taping over the whole weekend and we can sell commercial spots, so it's a potential money-maker for us as well as use it for a promotional tools, she adds.

"Because of the Chilliwack powwow, more and more of our families are travelling to New Mexico, Minnesota, Montana and Colorado as well as numerous locations in Canada to participate in other powwow competitions," says Point. "We are happy to be continuing and expanding our traditional values, once so close to being lost."



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The disappearing road

by Xavier Katakapi

The weather is getting warmer and signalling the beginning of another season of spring. Everyone up north is grateful for the end of a long and cold winter and for my people along the James Bay coast it is the time to look forward to and prepare for the annual spring goose hunt. In my community of Attawapiskat and other remote communities along the James Bay coast like Kashechewan and Fort Albany, the warmer weather also means the end of a direct and easy connection to the rest of the world.

During the warmer months of the year, remote First Nation communities have no easy connection to the outside world. There is no permanent road or railway system and travelling over water is difficult. Air travel is the only easy way to access or leave small isolated communities up north and for the most part this is an expensive form of travelling that few people can afford. The lack of easy transport of food and other needed materials for the community also means higher priced products that can make the cost of living expensive.

Communities along the James Bay coast look forward to the colder months of the year because the ice and snow creates a hard surface for travelling on, rather than the swamp and muskeg that is found throughout the James Bay lowlands. Snowmobiles provide us with access to many kilometers of land. The winter road is an important connection for everyone along the James coast and allows for inexpensive travel by car, truck or snowmobile to neighbouring communities like Kashechewan, Fort Albany and Moosonee/Moose Factory. From Moosonee people can access the train system to larger communities in the south.

Unfortunately, the winter road only lasts as long as the cold weather.

The winter road is open for large vehicles in January until late March. In April, people still take a chance to travel on cold days over this frozen surface with cars and trucks but warmer days make the going very difficult. By the middle of April the winter road is closed for the season. I am proud of the fact that my dad is one of the contractors that builds and maintains this winter road. It takes a lot of skill and knowledge to handle this project.

A few years ago my dad Marius, myself and several of my brothers made many trips to Moosonee by tractor to take advantage of the winter road to bring back building material, drums of diesel and gasoline fuel and cases of groceries. We used a newer Ford New Holland tractor that towed a flatbed trailer and a sleeping caboose to make regular trips back and forth from Attawapiskat to Moosonee every weekend. In cold weather when the road from south and north made travelling easy the trip either way lasted about 12 hours.

I recall one of our last trips during this period in early April when the winter road was starting to melt. We travelled by night when it was coldest and the ice and snow was hard enough to make moving along the winter road possible. A half ton truck also followed the tractor and several drivers rotated between the truck, tractor and sleeping in the caboose. Our truck was



CHRISTOPHER HARVEY, CHAMBAUD, 2002.

having a hard time keeping up with the tractor due to the slushy conditions so we used a long metal cable to hitch it to the back of the caboose.

Late at night, in one of the worst areas of melting ice and snow, we caught up to other travellers from our community in two trucks who were having a hard time moving over the melting landscape. We had followed their trail of deeply grooved tire tracks in the slushy snow for several kilometres. It was an exciting reunion out there in the dark on the isolated road. We took the time to share our stories of visiting Moosonee over hot cups of tea under a star-studded sky. My people always help each other out on the land and this was no exception. We pulled our little tractor ahead of our fellow travellers and then hitched their vehicles up to ours to make their trip easier.

It was mid afternoon when we arrived at the Attawapiskat River. At this point, each vehicle was unhitched from the convoy and then under their own power travelled across the water and slush on the river ice back into town. It was good to see the rooftops and the steeple of the Catholic Church of Attawapiskat and we all knew that a big meal and mom's familiar welcome was only a few minutes away. That was the

last trip of the year on the winter road and somehow although it was good to be home there was a sadness in realizing we were cut off from the rest of the world again.

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The Great Naming Contest

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt; told by Mary McKenzie

Long ago a chief named Muhkikoht had a tall beautiful daughter who had brown eyes and a very light tan. Many men wanted the maiden for their wife and Muhkikoht did not know how to give the girl to a man without offending many others. Then Muhkikoht thought of a way to give up the young woman.

He called all the suitors from the many different tribes in the area to a great council fire. He told them, "In the next few months I will hold a feast and whoever guesses the secret name of my daughter can have her as his woman."

The word of the great feast spread up the rivers to all the people in the northern forests. Many young men would come to try to guess the name of Muhkikoht's daughter. The young woman was not concerned however because only one person besides her father knew her name and that was her lover.

Then one day the great Wesuhkechahk heard about the great contest. Wesuhkechahk was curious so he decided to find out the secret name of the maiden and take her as his woman. He sat down to think of a way to find out the secret name of Muhkikoht's daughter.



Wesuhkechahk decided to ask his little brother the spider to go and learn the secret name of the young woman. He searched for the insect and soon found him making a net with which to catch his dinner. "Little brother, could you do me a favour and find out the secret name of Muhkikoht's daughter? I will reward you for your help."

The little spider agreed and climbed up into a tree and sailed off in the wind spinning a thin line behind him. Soon, he reached the camp of Muhkikoht and went into the lodge of the maiden.

Inside the teepee, the netmaker heard Muhkikoht talking to his daughter about the feast and naming contest. The spider heard the father call the young girl by her secret name. It was Kakhke-menu-kakhke.

The name meant "Forever-and-ever" and the spider was glad to find out her name so quickly. Soon he was off to find his big brother Wesuhkechahk.

The wind was blowing in the wrong direction, so the little web spinner had to wait. It was such a long way that he would never reach Wesuhkechahk. A few days after he left the lodge of Muhkikoht, he met Sihkos, the weasel.

He confided in the weasel and told him that he carried the secret name of the maiden and that he was to be rewarded by Wesuhkechahk as soon as he told him the secret name.



"I am afraid that I may never reach him because the wind is blowing so hard. Will you carry the secret name to Wesuhkechahk for me?" asked the spider. The weasel said he would carry the message, so the spider told him the secret name.



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Off went the weasel, but he soon got tired of running and decided he would not bother to search for Wesuhkechahk. The sly weasel went to the feast instead and claimed the hand of the young maiden.

The drums from Muhkikoht's band were ringing throughout the forest and many people from everywhere had come to try and guess the secret name. The chief was listening to all the guests but no one had guessed her name yet. The weasel ran up to Muhkikoht and perched on his hind feet and spoke to him. "I know the name of your daughter and I've come to claim her as my woman. You must keep your promise or you will lose your honour. Her name is Kakihke-menu-kakihke." All the songs and activities stopped as the guests realized that the weasel had guessed the name correctly.

The astonished Muhkikoht stood before all the Indians and said "The weasel has guessed the secret name and will take 'Forever-and-ever' as his woman."

Kakihke-menu-kakihke's lover arrived shortly after and was stunned at the news that Sihkos had already claimed the girl.



Meanwhile, the spider had finally reached Wesuhkechahk and asked him if the weasel had told him the secret name.

"No," said Wesuhkechahk. "The little beast did not tell me so I did not go to the feast. Now I hear that he has won the woman and will marry her any day now." Wesuhkechahk was very angry and he decided to have revenge upon the weasel. So, Wesuhkechahk went to the lodge of Muhkikoht and told the chief how the weasel had tricked them all.

When Muhkikoht heard of the weasel's trickery, he called the marriage off. The weasel had betrayed a trust to the spider and the great Wesuhkechahk. Kakihke-menu-kakihke would now be free to choose whoever she wanted for her mate.

The weasel learned he was in great danger and fled into the forest to escape the vengeance of Wesuhkechahk.



The great Wesuhkechahk has not caught him yet, but the weasel is still watching for him.

That is why he stops and takes a quick look around every so often.

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Whether you are planning a vacation, looking for the ideal place to raise your family or contemplating a new business opportunity, Peace River has what you are looking for.

Peace River's strategic location, size and servicing capability help to make the town an important centre of services for northwest Alberta. The town is located on or near highways to Alaska, British Columbia, southern Alberta and Canada's Northwest Territories being an important ground link to these destinations. Additionally, the town has the benefit of rail access making it an attractive site for businesses that require rail transport for shipping.

Air service is also available with the Peace River airport located 10 km west of the town, with a daily scheduled service, air cargo service and 737 jet capabilities. Peace River provides an ideal setting for both new business and established enterprise and is definitely "open for business."

The Town of Peace River and its surrounding forests, streams, rivers and moderately mountainous terrain is also the perfect place for those just looking for a place to relax and enjoy life while on vacation, or taking a weekend excursion. The Peace, Smoky and Heart rivers converge near the town and from surrounding



outlooks and observation areas such as Sagitawa Lookout and Kaufman Hill, visitors will be treated to the scenic display of the river valley.

The Town of Peace River is known for a number of historic facts and legendary figures. One of the most famous was Henry Fuller Davis. He was commonly known as "Twelve Foot Davis" due to his 12 foot land claim during the Cariboo Country gold rush in British Columbia which netted Davis almost \$30,000 worth of gold. He took these profits and staked it all on a trading post close to where the Town of Peace River stands today.

The Peace River Museum offers visitors more than 200 years of local history and explores such areas as the fur trade, the settlement of Peace River and Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the first non-Aboriginal to travel the mighty Peace River in 1792.

Along with great shopping, restaurants dance clubs and lounges, visitors to the Town of Peace River can always find accommodation to suit their needs with more than 400 rooms available at local hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast establishments. Campers will also find an abundant selection of outdoor facilities, many just minutes away from bowling alleys, riding stables, picnic areas, interpretative trails, golf courses, secluded fishing spots and much more. Hiking, cycling and just plain walking are the order of the day in Peace River country, where the breathtaking beauty of the natural valley hills offers the ideal setting for photographers and wildlife enthusiasts to capture the moment forever. Boat launches allow access to the river with water-skiing and canoeing being popular activities, while riverboat cruises are offered to those who just want to relax on warm, sunny days.

Winter visitors can ski the slopes of Misery Mountain, go cross-country skiing along one of the many trails in the valley, or toboggan down several area hills. A Beaver Indian legend says, "Drink the waters of the Peace River and you will return." Over the years people have continually returned to spend time in this valley to experience the warm, friendly hospitality and beauty that is Peace River. For more information visit <http://town.peacriver.ab.ca> or call (780) 624-2574.

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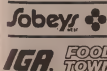
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The Healing Journey

Native health research gets major boost

by John Copley

Aboriginal health just got a big boost in Canada thanks to a recent initiative that will see the Canadian Institutes of Health Research provide \$12 million in grants to four Canadian cities, including Edmonton, to establish Native health research programs. The project is designed to "develop a network of supportive research environments across Canada that will facilitate the development of Aboriginal capacity in health research."

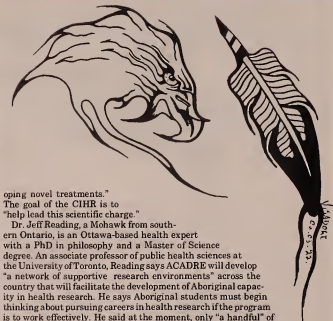
On June 7, 2000, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) opened its doors for the first time and according to the Institute's media relations' team, "since then the momentum of growth and progress in the field of health research just hasn't stopped."

That statement was corroborated late last month with an announcement by the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples Health (IAPH), one of 13 institutes that make up the CIHR that it had "completed its inaugural round of strategic health research application" and that it had chosen its first initiative.

The flagship initiative is the establishment of the Aboriginal Capacity and Developmental Research Environments (ACADRE) program. The four grants, which will be handed out over the next six years, have been awarded to Dr. Malcolm King, University of Alberta; Dr. John O'Neill, University of Manitoba; Dr. Eber Hampton, Saskatchewan Federated Indian College in partnership with the both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina; and Dr. Neil Andersson from Community, CIET Canada in partnership with the University of Ottawa.

The CIHR is Canada's premier federal agency for health research. "Our objective," said CIHR President Dr. Alan Bernstein, "is to excel, according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians, more effective health services and products and a strengthened health care system."

Health Sciences has made major inroads during the past several decades but nothing that compares with the pace that's continuing today. Scientists have already "mapped the complete sequence of all three billion bases of DNA belonging to the Human Genome," something the CIHR calls a "phenomenal first step towards understanding a variety of diseases and by understanding them, devel-



oping novel treatments."

The goal of the CIHR is to "help lead this scientific change."

Dr. Jeff Reading, a Mohawk from southern Ontario, is an Ottawa-based health expert with a PhD in philosophy and a Master of Science degree. An associate professor of public health sciences at the University of Toronto, Reading says ACADRE will develop "a network of supportive research environments" across the country that will facilitate the development of Aboriginal capacity in health research. He says Aboriginal students must begin thinking about pursuing careers in health research if the program is to work effectively. He said at the moment, only "a handful" of Aboriginal Canadians hold a PhD in any discipline. "Involving Aboriginal people in the development of research into Aboriginal health is critical to finding long-term solutions that address the serious problems in the community," he said. "Through the ACADRE program we will take an important step in developing a cadre of researchers that will be dedicated to research into Aboriginal health and in improving the health of the community."

Reading added that the goal of the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health is to "lead a national advanced research agenda in the area of Aboriginal health and to promote innovative research" in this field. Each of the 13 institutes that make up the CIHR is dedicated to a specific area of focus, linking and supporting researchers pursuing common goals. These researchers, who are located in numerous cities across Canada are working in universities, hospitals and other research-based centres in areas embraced by the Institute. These include biomedical, clinical research, health systems and services and the social, cultural and other factors that affect the health of populations.

The CIHR's based budget for 2001-2002 is \$477 million. The money currently funds 3,251 grants, 1625 awards, 644 Career Awards and about 4,000 trainees. "This strong commitment," assured Dr. Bernstein, "will allow Canada to keep its best and brightest scientists and remain internationally competitive in today's knowledge-based economy."

And as a result, he added, it is expected that all Canadians "will enjoy both the health and the economic benefits that are created by a robust health research enterprise."



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Renfrew programs for Youth affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol

A multi-faceted program currently in the works by Renfrew Educational Services would provide children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and their families strategies for dealing with the significant challenges associated with the diagnosis. Karen Serrett, Ph.D., a Psychologist at Renfrew, has been devoting a large portion of her time at Renfrew to research information on diagnostic and treatment strategies. The information is being used to enhance current services and develop additional FASD services in the near future. Current services include:

- programming using a "best practices" perspective for diagnosed children in preschool and ECSE enrolled at Renfrew;

- providing consultative support to parents and teachers in the Calgary community in dealing with the learning and behavioural challenges of children affected by prenatal alcohol exposure;

- providing an in-house diagnostic clinic for children attending Renfrew staffed by a multi-disciplinary team including Dr. Margaret Clarke and Dr. Ben Gibbard (Developmental Paediatricians), Dr. Karen Serrett (Psychologist), Sandra Rizzato (Occupational Therapist) and Marie Vale (Speech-Language Pathologist).

Future services include providing a Saturday day-long respite camp for young children with FASD diagnoses.

Services are intended to supplement those already existing in the community such as the Alberta Children's Hospital's FAS Diagnostic Clinic which has had an extensive waiting list since opening in January 2001.

Dr. Serrett graduated from Louisiana State University and completed a graduate internship at LSU Medical Centre (a "training" hospital) located in a high needs neighbourhood in New Orleans, Louisiana where a significant number of children born in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) were prenatally exposed to alcohol, drugs or both. Dr. Serrett's graduate training includes a Ph.D. with a major in psychology (focus - early intervention) and a minor in education (early childhood). Her internship was through the LSU Medical Centre and



included working in a University Affiliated Early intervention, to overcoming FAS Program (UAF) for preschool children with special needs (including FASD), serving as the "psychology" component of a multi-disciplinary team in the NICU unit in the hospital and the Early Intervention follow-up clinic, participating as a member of a Preschool Outreach Team, and working in several high-need schools. Since moving to Calgary in 1993, Karen has worked with children with a variety of special needs. This includes a stint at the Calgary Learning Centre where she worked with children, adolescents and adults with attention and learning difficulties.

Dr. Serrett indicated that parents are often seeking information on the characteristics and needs of FASD children at different stages of development, strategies for dealing with their sensory sensitivities (e.g., to noise, light, touch, smell, etc.), assistance in developing routines and helping children adjust to change, transitions and frustrations, strategies to prompt more independent functioning in the children and information on providing optimal cognitive and language stimulation to enhance early development.

"There has been a lot of research into the diagnosis of children with FAS, but very little on intervention," says Dr. Serrett, adding that current research does state that children do best when they receive an early diagnosis, early intervention, and live in a stable family environment. Although there is a paucity of research related to intervention, the limited research available indicates that early diagnosis and early intervention with these children and families leads to more optimal results. Additional anecdotal information from experts in the field and practical advice from families have also documented strategies that appear to work with these children. Renfrew's role will be to put these strategies, as well as other strategies that they have found useful with other special needs children, into place, and evaluate their success in addressing the needs of children prenatally exposed to alcohol.

In the next year, Renfrew hopes to establish more formal programming for young children prenatally exposed to alcohol, to offer increased consultative services to the community to assist individuals dealing with these children, to conduct workshops to enhance awareness of the disorder and appropriate intervention strategies and to be-

gin to open the Renfrew Diagnostic Clinic to the community. Also on the agenda is a respite day camp offered on Saturdays that would provide parents a safe, recreational setting for their children, while allowing them time to rest and regenerate. Renfrew is currently looking for private donations to cover the training costs for staff for the respite camp. For more information about Renfrew Educational Services call (403) 291-5038.



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The successful candidate must have a baccalaureate degree in one of the following: nursing, social work, family studies, psychology or related field. A Masters degree is preferred. The applicant must have direct work experience in the field of mental health and experience working with First Nations and Métis communities. A strong understanding of Aboriginal culture and issues impacting the mental health of Aboriginal people is required. A good understanding and experience in cross-cultural training is also required. Previous teaching experience with Aboriginal students is an asset.

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Resource Development

Blackstar's trade training a one of a kind initiative

by John Copley

Jobs are sometimes plentiful and when that's the case, no worries. But just as often, jobs are scarce and the only people working are the ones most qualified to do so. Cap that, says Blackstar Learning Centre Program Director, Phil Aube, with the fact that more post-secondary students than ever before are entering universities and colleges that specialize in computer training and technology, and it's just a matter of time before there are no more tradesmen left to meet the growing needs of the public and corporate sectors.

"There's already a shortage of qualified tradesmen," assured Aube, during a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*. "Trades people are already in demand and the future looks brighter than ever for those involved in or about to get involved in one of the various trades available through the Alberta Apprenticeship Program."

When the Blackstar Group first made the decision to launch an Aboriginal training program for the trades-related industries back in 1995, they followed the age-old philosophies of doing business, and as a result, success followed.

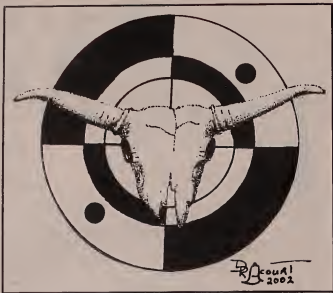
First the company explored the feasibility, contacted the Native community and during the development stages managed to see about 20 Aboriginal students placed into jobs that turned into full time employment.

"Extensive development was conducted with trade unions, trade contractors and local Aboriginal employment centres," explained Blackstar Energies Corporation President, Marc Charlebois. "To ensure maximum employment potential for our students, we believe it is important to work with the various industries, to keep in touch with contacts and to maintain a follow-up and support program for people we help to place. We are ongoing in our pursuit of new alliances with major corporations, contractors, government and trades unions and others willing and able to place pre-apprenticeship trained people on an apprenticeship program within their organizations."

"Aboriginal candidates wanting to learn a trade and willing to put in the time and the work experience it takes to become an expert in his or her field now have the opportunity to do so," said Phil Aube. "In the past there have been many barriers facing Native people seeking to establish an apprenticeship in the trades, in fact those barriers still exist today. But Blackstar's Aboriginal Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program can make the difference. We not only ready candidates for prospective employment opportunity, we help them find work. Once they are employed we have a follow-up program that sees an employment counsellor follow participants through their first six months on the job. This is to ensure that their employability skills are up-to-par and to provide the assistance or advice they might need if difficulties arise."

Blackstar also includes assistance on an as-is basis after the six-month period to ensure that the full 1,500 hours of work experience, as required by the Apprenticeship Board, is met. But unlike the traditional first year apprentice approach, Blackstar participants have an edge.

"We will offer our services to consult with our program graduates to ensure that all first year elements are taught according to the guidelines of the Apprenticeship



Board and to minimize any potential mistreatment," assured Marc Charlebois. "This may involve interaction with the employer on behalf of the participant for potential conflict resolution and mediation. This value-added service creates a greater potential for long-term success on the part of the participant because when someone is there to help guide you along, and when necessary help to protect your interests, your self-esteem is enhanced and your determination to succeed is strengthened."

One of the first projects undertaken by the Blackstar Learning Centre was with the Metis Regional Council Zone 3 office in Calgary. Beginning in the fall of 1998 and winding up in March of 1999, the program was designed for students in the pre-trades apprenticeships.

"The project was an outstanding success," said Aube, crediting that achievement as the first of many. "A ratio of 72 percent of the students in that program were placed into employment after they graduated."

Since then Blackstar has moved on, first to Camrose then to Edmonton. "Our current project," explained Aube, "is a 22-week program through Alberta Human Resources and Employment. The program is designed to involve a total of 240 students; we expect to put about 72 people through the program each year over the project's three-year duration. Participants will complete 16 weeks of classes and six weeks of on-the-job training."

The prospects for employment in the trades' fields are good, and whether your interest lies in plumbing or carpentry, masonry, sheet metal, pipefitting, mechanics, millwright, ironwork or bricklaying, the opportunities are the same.

"The objective of the pre-apprenticeship training program," emphasized Program Director Aube, "is to provide an orientation of the trades available and to assist Aboriginal people in establishing successful careers with the apprentice trades industry by assisting the participants to overcome employment barriers, gain apprenticeship skills and provide assistance in job placement. Applicants must be Aboriginal, between the ages of 18 and 55 and have completed at least a Grade 9 education. We begin a new program every two months and it takes between five and eight weeks for the application process to run its course. We do have room in programs that begin this summer and encourage interested applicants to get in touch with our offices as soon as possible. We do have a brief orientation session and an application process and as we all know, everything takes time."

Don't wait until it's too late – if you're interested in taking up a trade contact Blackstar Learning Centre Incorporated in Edmonton by calling April at (780) 442-2510. As this newspaper goes to press the Centre is moving into its new offices in the Ellis Building, located at 10123 - 112 Street, Edmonton.

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Four Yukon First Nations successfully conclude their land claim negotiations

Negotiators for four First Nations, the Government of Yukon and the Government of Canada have recently signed individual Memorandums of Understanding officially concluding negotiations.

The Carcross/Tagish, Kluane, Kwanlin Dun and White River First Nations have successfully concluded their land claim talks.

"This is a landmark achievement for First Nation citizens and the Yukon. The Carcross/Tagish, Kluane, Kwanlin Dun and White River First Nations have shown that through resolve and perseverance, we can all work together to reach positive and equitable outcomes," DIAND Minister Robert Nault said.

"I look forward to endorsing the Memorandums of Understanding with the four First Nation Chiefs and the Yukon Premier to confirm our commitment to complete the necessary work and proceed with the ratification process," said Minister Nault. "The completion of agreements with the Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation in mid-April will mean that the Indian Act will no longer apply in the



DR COVAT 2002

Yukon Territory when all the final and self-government agreements take effect in 2003."

The Government of Canada provided a 12-month extension to its mandate to complete the technical and legal drafting of the four agreements along with their ratification by all parties by March 2003.

Under their Final and Self-Government Agree-

ments, the four First Nations will retain roughly 4,000 square kilometres of land and receive some \$77 million, adjusted for inflation, over the next 15 years.

The Carcross/Tagish, Kluane, Kwanlin Dun and White River First Nations will also benefit from the federal government's Strategic Economic Development Investment Fund. They will receive over \$18 million for economic development, training and education projects.

The Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation will resume their six days of negotiations early this month. These six days were deferred as an expression of respect for the grieving family of the Kaska chief negotiator.



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Forestry program renewed

The Government of Canada will continue supporting innovative forestry initiatives in First Nations communities by renewing the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) until March 31, 2003.

The Government of Canada will contribute \$4.5 million to support the FNFP over the next year – with INAC providing \$2.75 million and NRCan \$1.75 million – and will investigate longer-term partnership funding opportunities in order to continue the program. First Nations and the forest industry are other major funding partners.

"The FNFP has played a major role in creating economic development opportu-

nities and encouraging First Nations to participate in the forest sector," said Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault. "By working in partnership with the corporate sector, First Nations are able to improve the quality of life in their communities and benefit from sustainable resource development." During the past six years, the FNFP has assisted more than 350 communities and 4,700 First Nations workers, on and off reserve, gain valuable experience in forestry management," said Natural Resources Canada Minister Herb Dhaliwal. "Through this renewed program, First Nations and the Government of Canada can continue to make a real difference in the lives of Aboriginal people in Canada – improving quality of life through sustainable resource development, environmental preservation and economic growth."

The FNFP, open to all First Nations communities in Canada, aims to improve economic conditions in these communities by providing the opportunity to enhance their capacity to manage forests, operate and participate in forest-based businesses, and increase cooperation and partnerships among First Nations. It enables First Nations communities to increase their forestry-related knowledge, capabilities and business skills essential to greater participation in Canada's forest sector. It also investigates mechanisms for financing First Nations forestry development.

Since being established in 1996, the FNFP has supported more than 1,100 projects with \$25 million in federal contribution funding and \$58 million in partnered funding. About 57 percent of the 610 bands in Canada participate in the program – the majority of these communities are located in rural and remote areas. As the non-Aboriginal workforce ages and as First Nations communities gain more access to forest resources through treaties, land entitlements and court decisions, the FNFP is expected to continue providing opportunities to First Nations.

The FNFP is known for its excellence and achievements. The Treasury Board Secretariat recognized it in its February 2001 Report to Parliament as one of the 12 outstanding programs within the Government of Canada. It was also selected as a successful example of interdepartmental cooperation in the May 2000 report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

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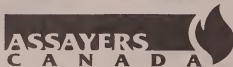
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Protecting Mother Earth



U.S. study says northern oil development will damage environment

by John Copley

A recent study conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey, a branch of U.S. Department of the Interior, says there is a heavy price to pay for exploring, developing and extracting oil from Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The report, released just days before the Senate began talks about the feasibility of drilling for gas and oil in the 20 million acre refuge, opposes the path currently being explored by the Bush administration, who have expressed their intent to investigate every avenue that will allow for northern oilfield development and resource extraction, including a pipeline to transport the raw goods south of the 49th Parallel.

But since the release of the report industry experts, financial analysts and supporters of the oil and gas exploration and drilling industry who want work to begin in the now-pristine forests of the Arctic have dismissed the news as unimportant. Not so the case in northern communities nor with the environmental and wildlife groups whose worst nightmare seems about to come true.

Whitehouse spokesman, Gordon Johnstone, told Associated Press in early April that government wasn't considering the U.S. Geological Survey report because "we are talking about exploring a very small part of the refuge."

The Defenders of Wildlife (DOW) organization, however, shakes its head at that comment. Their spokesperson said "the oil companies have their sights on the biological heart of the refuge, its Arctic Ocean coastal plain, an area critical to the survival of many birds and mammals. About 160 bird species, including species that visit each of the lower 48 states, find breeding, nesting or resting places on the coastal plain. The plain is also the most important onshore denning area in the United States for polar bears. It is the principal calving ground of the 130,000 strong migratory Porcupine caribou herd, the second largest caribou herd in the United States and a key source of food, clothing and medicine for the Gwich'in (Aboriginal) peoples, one of the world's few remaining subsistence cultures."

The region is also home to the wolf, grizzly, wolverine, Arctic fox, northern lynx and several species of whales.

"And," reminded DOW, "the 1980 law that created the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge also closed 1.5 million acres of the coastal plain to gas and oil exploration unless specifically authorized by Congress."

This they say was done for a reason. First, "more than 90 percent of the coastal lands west of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge have already been opened to drilling, with many documented negative effects on wildlife and habitat. Second, despite claims by the big oil companies that they can drill and have drilled responsibly on Alaska's North Slope, spills are commonplace."

An example of promises made but not kept can be found at the Prudhoe Bay oilfield, located just 60 miles west of the refuge.

"Reportable spills of oil products and hazardous substances happen every day and are compounded by the noise and air pollution industrialization brings," says DOW. "Shortly after drilling started in this area, the central Arctic caribou herd shifted its calving grounds away from development, resulting in the use of lower quality habitats." The organization, just one of a half dozen trying to bring attention to the negative possibilities of any additional oil field development in the refuge, says drilling proponents often use positive comparisons and show samples of good working relationships between man and beast but that often these comparisons (to a layman) are like "comparing apples and oranges and grapes; they just don't compare."

Some added controversy to the drilling debate has been stirred up because of the different perspectives of the two Gwich'in populations in the area, one American and one Canadian.

But there are two sides to every story as an email conversation with one northern Canadian resident would indicate.

"I don't know why the Alaskan Gwich'in are taking sides with the environmental activists," said Kwaal, in a message to *Western Native News* earlier this month. "It is difficult to understand. The Canadian Gwich'in have taken the bull by the horns or are now preparing to drill for oil in the Mackenzie River Delta. The company called Gwich'in Oilfield Services is 51 percent owned by Natives and 49 by Ensign Drilling out of Calgary. The company is already exploring the nearly 1.5 million acres of land currently being governed by First Nations groups in the north. The Alaskan Gwich'in need to get involved before they are pushed aside. Let's face it, there's more oil under this ice than just about anywhere else on earth - it's just a matter of time before development arrives up here. Maybe it's time that we get a share of things, but it won't happen if we're on the outside looking in."

But the five main environmental and wildlife groups trying to keep Canada's pristine wilderness intact disagree, saying that once the environment has been destroyed and the animals lost, nothing will bring them back. And as the environment goes, add the Alaskan Gwich'in, "so go our people."

A recent copy of the on-line magazine, *The Refuge*, quotes, Lorrain Netto, a Gwich'in lady whose words perhaps outline just what many northern residents are thinking.

"My home is in Old Crow near the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. My people talk about the sacred places within our nation, like the refuge, and our need to protect these sacred places because of our spiritual connection between the land, the animals, and our

people. In this day and age, it's difficult sometimes for others to understand how this can still be, and yet it's so much a part of us that we can't see it any other way."



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Fate of ancient rainforests is still uncertain

One year after the precedent-setting Great Bear Rainforest Agreement was announced to protect 603,000 hectares of British Columbia's ancient forests, Gordon Campbell's Liberal government is not living up to many of its commitments. A coalition of environmental groups recently said the government's lack of progress in implementing critical components of the accord could threaten, this hard-won truce between environmentalists and logging companies.

Forest Ethics, Greenpeace, the Sierra Club of British Columbia and Rainforest Action Network – the four environmental groups centrally involved in forging long-term solutions for the region – have released their first annual Great Bear Rainforest Report Card. The provincial government received failing grades for the lack of progress on two major elements of the accord – protection of 20 rainforest valleys and implementation of the First Nations protocol, and a D for minimal attention to environmentally sustainable planning. The Liberals received average grades for slow progress in managing economic change and establishing a team of independent scientists and economists who will analyze options for the region.

"This government is failing to follow through with an agreement that they have internationally heralded," stated Merran Smith, Director, B.C. Coastal Program, Forest Ethics. "The progress has been minimal and slow, leading us to ask 'Will peace in the woods survive this government?'"

On April 4, 2001, after intense negotiations, environmental groups, First Nations, logging companies, workers, communities and the provincial government agreed to a new approach to conservation and sus-



tainable management in the Great Bear Rainforest and Haida Gwaii (the Queen Charlotte Islands). If implemented in its entirety, this agreement could set British Columbia on the path to becoming a global leader in environmental stewardship, and could create new economic opportunities for a coastal economy crippled by the boom-and-bust cycle of industrial forestry.

"The Liberals are moving at a glacial pace. To date, they have failed to protect our ancient coastal rainforests, failed to respect First Nations rights and failed to begin diversifying the coastal economy," said Catherine Stewart, forest campaigner for Greenpeace.

"The global marketplace has changed and the trend is irreversible. Customers want products derived from ecologically responsible logging, and B.C. forest companies claim they are prepared to begin meeting that challenge. Now, the question is: When will this government act to support real change?"

Customers in the United States, Europe and Japan, who purchase more than \$2 billion worth of B.C. forest products, support the conservation of endangered forests, including the Great Bear Rainforest. They include major wood products retailers such as Home Depot, Ikea and Lowe's.

Leading U.K. decorative timber products manufacturer, Richard Burbridge Ltd., is one of many customers supporting the Great Bear Rainforest agreement and believes it is important that the provincial government acts swiftly.

"We are keen to increase our use of B.C. timbers, but this issue remains a sticking point with many of our retail customers and U.K. consumers," stated Chief Executive Richard Burbridge.

"The forest needs protection, as well as providing a valuable resource, and the agreement last year seemed to promise real progress. The longer the delay, the more market share B.C. suppliers will lose in the U.K. and the harder it will be for them to recapture that business from Nordic and other suppliers."

"Another war in the woods would spell disaster for B.C. investment and jobs," said Bill Wareham, Executive Director of the Sierra Club of British Columbia. "The Liberals need to act now and meet their commitments."

To view the entire report card and learn more about the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement, visit www.savethegreatbear.org.

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Economic & Business Development

Spirit Staffing has a workplace solution for you

by Jennifer Dawson

Are you looking for an employer who values your diversity and unique view of the world?

Spirit Staffing & Consulting Inc. may be the workplace solution for you. One hundred percent Aboriginal owned and operated, Spirit Staffing & Consulting Inc. was established in 1998 by Janice Larouque, a driven and dynamic Metis woman looking for a way to bridge the gap between the Aboriginal community and the business world in Calgary. Janice's vision for an equal opportunity employment agency was conceptualized during her eight years as manager of an Aboriginal Employment and Training Centre. Janice saw the need to establish a positive, effective resource for Aboriginal people searching for professional employment in Calgary.

The vision and values held by Spirit Staffing & Consulting Inc. have earned Janice notable recognition within the business community. As winner of the "Metis Entrepreneurial Leadership Award" and "the Minister's Award for Excellence" presented by Western Economic Diversification and the Alberta Women's Enterprise Association, Spirit Staffing & Consulting Inc. is fast becoming a leader in equal opportunity employment placement. After three years of leading the field in "Workplace Diversity Solutions," Spirit Staffing has placed in excess of 500 trained professionals in companies such as Husky Energy, TransAlta, Indian Oil and Gas, Epcor and Federal and Provincial Government contracts.

With national expansion on the horizon for Spirit Staffing & Consulting Inc., the demand for qualified Aboriginal professionals appears to be increasing rapidly. Aboriginal professionals are being given the recognition they deserve. All Aboriginal professionals offer the same exceptional skills as any mainstream employee, however, they also contribute a unique Canadian perspective that has long been absent in the workplace.

For many years, companies were subsidized by the Government to hire Aboriginal employees, however, that mindset is being replaced with the realization that Canadian industries must reflect a more realistic Canadian demographic in order to thrive. Canada is a diverse, multicultural mosaic of people, with Aboriginal tradition being one of the first definitive cultures of this nation – it is time the workplace was a representation of that mosaic. With the possibility of 900,000 Aboriginal youth entering the workforce in the next five years, Spirit Staffing & Consulting Inc. wants to be at the forefront in promoting and recognizing the skills of these dynamic individuals.

With Canadian industries embracing the notion of workplace diversity, the possibilities for Aboriginal professionals are limitless.

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- Robertson Holdings Inc.
- Arctic Digital Communications Inc.
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Referendum, continued from page 15

Chief Sayers said that the B.C. government is setting itself up for certain litigation and continuing protests by continuing with the province-wide referendum.

As of April 9 the referendum ballot return rate was minimal. But Attorney General Plant's words indicate that government has already made its decision about Aboriginal land claims and that no matter what the vote, they'll do exactly as they please.

"They (B.C. Liberals) made lots of promises when they wanted to win the last election," said Arnold Buckle, a Merit, B.C. First Nation citizen who contacted *Western Native News* last week, "but so far all they've done is taken an about-face, speaking with two tongues, one that promises hope, the other that says this hope will come through the destruction and demise of the Aboriginal peoples of B.C. Let's face it, the government is trying to dissolve current treaty deals and prevent any more from taking place."

Without input from the federal government and the First Nations communities of B.C., the referendum is nothing but an expensive waste of taxpayers money, and ironically it is the waste of money, or at least the shortage of it, that brought about Campbell's over-zealous actions toward Aboriginal peoples and others in the province since his election victory.

The government's eight referendum questions are somewhat incomplete, quite confusing and just misleading enough to allow the Liberals to manipulate and use the results any way they choose. But if they choose to continue to ignore the plight of Native people and if they choose to continue to brush Aboriginal people aside, it won't just be Chief Judy Sayers who says "this is just a battle, we still have a war ahead of us."

Referendum questions

Voters are asked to consider and vote yes or no to each of the eight principles, as follows:

Whereas the Government of British Columbia is committed to negotiating workable, affordable treaty settlements that will provide certainty, finality and equality; do you agree that the Provincial Government should adopt the following principles to guide its participation in treaty negotiations?

1. Private property should not be expropriated for treaty settlements.
2. The terms and conditions of leases and licences should be respected; fair compensation for unavoidable disruption of commercial interests should be ensured.
3. Hunting, fishing and recreational opportunities on Crown land should be ensured for all British Columbians.
4. Parks and protected areas should be maintained for the use and benefit of all British Columbians.
5. Province-wide standards of resource management and environmental protection should continue to apply.
6. Aboriginal self-government should have the characteristics of local government, with powers delegated from Canada and British Columbia.
7. Treaties should include mechanisms for harmonizing land use planning between Aboriginal governments and neighbouring local governments.
8. The existing tax exemptions for Aboriginal people should be phased out. The referendum will be held under the *Referendum Act*. It will be conducted by mail-in ballot, and administered by Elections BC. Ballots will be mailed to B.C. voters starting April 2. Voting begins when ballots are received. The last day for returning ballots will be May 15 and the results will be announced as soon as counting is complete.

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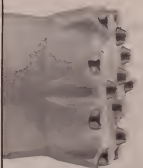
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Legislation passed for Prairie claim settlements

Legislation that will facilitate the implementation of existing and future claim settlements with First Nations in Alberta and Saskatchewan received Royal Assent last month. The Claim Settlements (Alberta and Saskatchewan) Implementation Act will streamline the process of conferring reserve status on lands acquired as part of claim settlements, thereby allowing First Nations to more quickly realize the associated economic benefits of those settlements.

"The Claim Settlements (Alberta and Saskatchewan) Implementation Act is indicative of the Government of Canada's commitment to enhance the self-sufficiency of First Nations," said Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Robert Nault. "This legislation will contribute to stronger community-based economies by providing First Nations governments in Alberta and Saskatchewan with more options when it comes to selecting land and pursuing economic development opportunities on that land. Both First Nations and investors alike will benefit from increased certainty of land use status during the reserve creation process."

Agreements between Canada and a First Nation to settle historical grievances constitute the most common source of additions to reserves. Lands added to reserves under claim settlements are either unoccupied provincial or federal Crown lands, or lands purchased by First Nations from willing sellers on mutually satisfactory terms. Canada's Additions-to-Re-



serve policy requires First Nations to address third-party interests before the land can be afforded reserve status.

The Act provides more expedient ways to accommodate third-party interests. The Act also empowers the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to confer reserve status on lands selected by Alberta and Saskatchewan First Nations under claims settlements, rather than require an order in council. This Act was patterned on Part 2 of the Manitoba Claim Settlements Implementation Act, enacted by Parliament in October 2000. First Nations in all three of the prairie provinces now have the choice of opting

into the new process or continuing with previously existing processes in relation to any or all of their claim settlements.

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